

# LABOR MAGAZINE



THE VOICE OF PROGRESSIVE LABOR

*Do We Need A*  
**NEW PARTY?**

C.P.L.A. Statement for Discussion

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**Paterson Silk Strike**

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**The Belleville Convention**

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**Liberalism in the Socialist Party**

**AUGUST, 1931**

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## LABOR AGE

Vol. XX—No. 8

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## C.P.L.A. ON THE MARCH

THE West Virginia battle front boasts of 7,000 to 8,000 men on strike, and coal production in that territory, is at a standstill. In the face of wholesale evictions and the brutality of company gunmen, the West Virginia Mine Workers Union is carrying the banner of militant unionism into the heart of the southern coal fields. Frank Keeney and his gallant army of fighting miners are demonstrating the fact that the stoutest bulwark against starvation remains an effective labor organization.

THE movement for an effective miners union has been given considerable impetus by the splendid Rank and File Convention held on July 6 at Belleville, Illinois, representing 75 per cent of the Illinois District, U. M. W. of A. Under the leadership of such veteran fighters as Jim Haynes and Bill Stoffels, a Brookwooder and C.P.L.A.-er, we may look confidently for even greater achievements in the near future.

HELL rages in Harlan, Kentucky, as the miners fight back against the armed terror of the coal operators. But we are assured that "broken heads, brutalities, starvation, injustices at the hands of officials, the failure of the U. M. W. of A., prison bars, nor the seemingly unbreakable power of the operators can defeat the determination of these miners."

PATERSON, the Silk City, scene of memorable labor struggles, is again on the map. The C.P.L.A. has succeeded in bringing into effect a unified campaign on the part of the Associated Silk Workers and the United Textile

Workers of America against the silk bosses. This united campaign has already brought 8,000 silk workers out in response to the call of the joint committee. The Communist controlled National Textile Workers Union is pursuing its disruptive splitting policy in the face of the crying need for unity against the silk bosses. As a result of this suicidal policy, the Communists are steadily losing in influence and organizational following. Louis Budenz is bringing the spirit and vim that won the Kenosha strike to Paterson and the silk workers are responding enthusiastically.

WHITE PLAINS highway construction laborers, though inexperienced in the ways of organization, carried on a brilliant fight against the Westchester County contractors, against a wage cut of 20 per cent. On the eve of a settlement restoring the wage cut, ousting the scabs and rehiring the strikers with the right to have their own union, Benjamin Mandel, who represented the C.P.L.A. in White Plains, was framed up and put into jail. The contractors utilized the situation to put through a sell-out in cooperation with the A. F. of L., whereby the majority of the strikers are locked out today. Mandel was convicted on a charge of "pushing" an officer and fined \$100.00.

A HEATED discussion has developed in labor circles as a result of the proposal presented by the National Committee of the C.P.L.A. on the question of the need for a new political party of labor. It looks as if the next few months will witness some strenuous orating and perhaps some clarification, as a result of this discussion. The issues raised are outstanding in their significance and importance at the present moment. Let us hope that out of it will come a real forward step that will set the American labor movement definitely on the road toward building its own mass party.

THE Brooklyn Edison Company, as a result of the public pressure exerted by the campaign against the lay-offs, has recently appropriated \$12,394,000 for additional construction work, exclusive of the \$5,000,000 appropriated a few weeks ago.

Squads are now functioning effectively in the cable, sub-way construction, power house, office and wiring departments and the spirit of organization is spreading rapidly.

A report is now circulating throughout the company, that Matthew S. Sloan, the president of the Edison Companies, is being forced to resign, as a result of the unfavorable publicity given the company by our campaign against the lay-offs and slave-driving methods.

In order to stop the distribution of the *Live Wire*, organ of the Organization Committee, the Brooklyn Edison Company has attempted to cause the arrest of those distributing the paper. The decision of Judge Folwell, in the First Magistrate's Court in Brooklyn, have, however, been favorable in each case.

A PICNIC to Brookwood! On Sunday, August 16! By automobile! The prospect has C.P.L.A.-ers gasping with delight. Reservations are swarming in to the office for the gala occasion. And you'd be surprised how many have come across with the offer of a machine for the trip.



# · LABOR · AGE ·

August, 1931

## EDITORIALS

**H**OOVER'S Department of Labor, which has become a deportation, strike-breaking agency, reports almost as many labor disputes for the first six months of 1931 as during all of 1930. And the number grows daily. There have been spontaneous walk-outs of the workers all over the country, with the mining and textile industries leading in the extent and bitterness of the strikes. The latest additions are the strike of the West Virginia miners and the Paterson textile general shut-down.

### Misery Strikes Grow In Number

What has been happening in western Pennsylvania, southern West Virginia, Kentucky, New England, Allentown and Paterson fulfills the prediction made a few months ago in *LABOR AGE*. We emphasized that there was going to be a great wave of strikes, of up-risings of the workers, comparable to the period of 1917-18. We are now just at the beginning of this strike wave, which next winter will be in full force. The wage-slashing drive of the bosses will be met with increasing bitterness and determination by the workers.

This is the time for all true radicals to be out in the field, active in pointing out the lessons which the workers must learn from the conditions they are facing. These misery strikes must be turned into mass educational undertakings. This is the time for winning immediate results for the workers and pointing to the future.

It is the progressive laborites who can best measure up to the present crisis. They are equipped with knowledge of the situation and of the American scene. Do they have the initiative to take advantage of the opportunity before them?

**S**ECRETARY OF COMMERCE ROBERT P. LAMONT, as spokesman of the Hoover cabinet, has put the official stamp of approval upon the policy of wage slashing, which has been consistently followed by the big industries of the country for the past year. Evidently this statement was needed to fully counteract the effects of the so-called anti-wage cut pronouncements of Herbert Hoover.

### Hoover Government Sanctifies Wage Slashes

Timed almost perfectly with this official declaration of Mr. Lamont came the announcement of a 20 per cent wage cut by the Colorado Fuel and Iron Company. The U. S. Steel Corporation followed suit with a cut of all salaried employees as a preliminary to a cut in the wages of the steel workers. The Delaware & Hudson Railroad announces that officers had "voluntarily" taken a 10 per cent cut in salaries, while Armour & Co. calls attention to a cut in salaries ranging from 5 per cent to 10 per cent.

According to reports submitted by employers to the U. S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 10 establishments cut wages in the month of June 1931, the number of workers affected being 25,645 and the average cut being 10.8 per cent. These

wage reductions were chiefly in the food, textile, paper and pulp, iron and steel, lumber and fertilizer industries.

These facts indicate which way the wind is blowing. Instead of the good times predicted by Hoover as a result of the "moratorium boomlet"; we are faced with the prospect of an intensive drive on wages on a nation-wide scale, with the full backing and support of the federal government. Never before was organization more necessary than it is today. The A. F. of L. officialdom, as usual, is doing nothing about this situation, except empty talk. The Communists continue their ranting with its inevitable result of driving the workers away from any real organizational forward step. It remains for the realistic militants, who realize the gravity of the present situation, to assume full responsibility, to pitch in with enthusiasm and tackle the job, which must be done, if there is to be an effective resistance to the wage slashing campaign now in full swing. West Virginia, Paterson, White Plains are proof of the fact that the policy of the wage slashers has not gone unchallenged.

**M**MORRIS HILLQUIT, who still remains the political and intellectual leader of the Socialist Party of America, National Chairman, and International Secretary, as well as its duly accredited and leading delegate to the Socialist International Congress in Vienna, has announced his withdrawal as the legal representative of 16 oil companies and two individuals, in a suit challenging the right of the Soviet Union to expropriate the properties of these companies. Apparently the political atmosphere in the United States was such that Hillquit felt that he could properly press such a suit against the Soviet government without in any way conflicting with his Socialist principles and his responsibilities, as the leader of the party. It remained for the balmy air of Paris to convince Hillquit of the inadvisability of this step at the present time.

Actually the decision of Hillquit was an enforced retreat in the face of the storm of protest which arose from all parts of the country against this distinctly counter-revolutionary step. The City Convention of the Socialist Party of Philadelphia denounced the action of Hillquit in a resolution which was carried by a vote of 34 to 7. Similar resolutions have been adopted by numerous Socialist Party branches. Individual protests have poured into the national office.

The question which still remains for all honest Socialists and class-conscious workers to answer is, first, why did Hillquit as a leading Socialist ever take the case and how could he justify his taking the case on the basis of Socialist principles? Second, how can any honest, militant Socialist, who respects the memory of Gene Debs and Karl Marx, feel anything but the keenest humiliation in the face of the shameful "exploit" of its present leader?

**J**USTICE, decency, humanity—where shall we find them today? Certainly not among the ruling classes in these United States of America. Here in the richest country

### Justice, Decency, Humanity

the world has ever known millions of men and women are desperately begging for work. Here where food and clothing exist in abundance, thousands of children are starving and men and women walk the streets in rags.

And now when these millions of men and women who have produced the great wealth of this country begin to protest against the wretched condition of their lives, how are they being treated? When they appeal to the rulers, whom they have been taught to believe are all-wise and benevolent, how do these rulers answer them?

In the Kenawha coal fields of West Virginia, where for years hundreds of families have been living on the verge of starvation, surrounded by the most wretched conditions, their protests and appeals are being answered with machine-gun bullets and tear gas. These miners have been producing one of the most necessary commodities for creating the wealth of this country; they have toiled long hours in damp mines bringing forth millions of dollars of wealth; they have risked their lives daily—for what? That a few hundred men should become rich. And now these rich men answer their pleas for food and justice with machine-gun bullets and tear gas and clubs. Their women and children are brutally beaten. Their homes are broken up and their belongings thrown out on the roads and the creek bottoms.

In western Pennsylvania and Harlan County, Kentucky they are being answered in the same way. In Harlan County more than a hundred men are in jail because they have dared to question the right of the bosses to rob them and starve them. Twenty of this hundred are awaiting trial on triple murder charges. And everyone who attempts to help these workers in their fight against starvation and slavery are treated by coal barons and public officials with the worst kind of brutality.

Obviously, under capitalism, there can be no justice or decency or humanity for the workers. In a society ruled by the profit motive, where the supreme power is the dollar, men become beasts and the long centuries of man's struggle for social justice and decency have been futile. Those who produce are robbed and starved and clubbed, while those who squander and waste are honored, and are all-powerful.

Capitalism must be destroyed. Unless it is destroyed civilization cannot survive. Thus the future of civilization rests with the workers, and all those who oppose the destruction of capitalism are enemies of mankind.



**D**URING recent weeks General Holbrook has revealed in a public utterance that capitalist nations, including our own, are still thinking very definitely of the possibilities of war on Soviet Russia. Matthew Woll, et al, are devoting time and energy to arousing hate against the Soviets and advocating a boycott of all Soviet Commerce, which is tantamount to a declaration of

### Concerning Soviet Russia, the C.P.L.A. and the Kautsky Review

war. In face of such developments we re-iterate the stand repeatedly taken by the C. P. L. A. in favor of recognition of Soviet Russia by the U. S., and of positive and

relentless opposition to all militarist and imperialist efforts to weaken or destroy the Soviet regime.

This does not mean that Russia can or should escape all criticism. No intelligent member of the Soviet regime would think for a moment that absence of criticism and intelligent discussion could be of real benefit to Russia. Furthermore, if we are going to be realistic, we have to realize that there is some difference between criticising the Soviet regime and criticising those who at a given time happen to be its heads, as e.g., the Stalin group at the moment. Damning an A. F. of L. official and damning the American labor movement are not quite the same thing!

To some of our readers who seemed to find in the review of Kautsky's book in our July issue an "attack" on "the proletarian dictatorship" in Russia we venture to say that it does not seem to us that a fair reading of the review supports such an interpretation, though one or two phrases might not have been used by the author if it had been realized that those expressions might lend themselves to such an interpretation by any honest reader. We would add that in our opinion the utmost care must be exercised, in this day when the Soviets are under attack from imperialist foes, even in criticism of the present ruling group in the Russian Communist Party. It is all too easy in such a situation without intending it to give "aid and comfort to the enemy."

What we want emphatically is that the workers shall turn, to quote the closing paragraph of the aforementioned Kautsky review, "with renewed vigor and enthusiasm for inspiration in their struggle against the scourges of capitalism, unemployment and imperialist war, to the Soviet Union, the home of proletarian democracy, the democracy of, by and for the poor, as against the democracy of privilege, exploitation and poverty."



**W**ITH the most limited resources, yet with utmost determination, the C.P.L.A. has thrown itself into the struggles of the workers which are rapidly developing throughout the country. In

### Our Organization Pledge Fund

West Virginia, in Allentown, in Mansfield, in Paterson, in White Plains and in the Brooklyn Edison, the C.P.L.A. is on the job building and inspiring the armies of labor.

For this important work, we are not subsidized by any wealthy "angels," nor do we receive any form of support through international sources. We must depend upon friends and supporters, who realize the importance of the work we are doing, to give us the necessary financial support which is so badly needed in order to carry this work forward.

The C.P.L.A. has established an Organization Pledge Fund for the purpose of financing our organization campaign in various parts of the country. We appeal to you to do your share in support of this fund by sending us an immediate contribution and pledging your regular support every month for the furtherance of our activity. Support from organizations in sympathy with our program is particularly urged.

American workers are being subjected to the most severe oppression and suppression today. They are beginning to protest; they are beginning to realize that the much talked of "American standard of living" is not a thing of permanence. This is the time to organize them. This is the time to educate them in the class struggle.

Will you help us do this most important work?

# Labor's Answer



# Report

## On Political Organization

OUR economic system has broken down. The break-down is both tragic and absurd.

Three short years ago when campaigning for the presidency, Herbert Hoover paid homage to the myth of Permanent American Prosperity which at that time held millions, including workers and farmers, spell-bound. "The poor man," he said, "is vanishing from us . . . At one time we demanded for our workers a full dinner pail. We have now gone far beyond that conception." Shortly thereafter the income of the working masses of the U. S. was slashed in a single year to the tune of ten billion dollars. Over night the era of the "chicken in every pot and a car in every back-yard" vanished.

Today six million workers are out of jobs; as many more are on such short time that they cannot support themselves and their families on their wages. Farmers in Arkansas, coal miners in West Virginia, automobile workers in Michigan join in hunger marches. Others are forced to submit to the humiliation of standing in bread-lines, accepting doles of soup from relief kitchens, hanging about the corridors of charity societies, or else simply put an end to their lives after weeks and months of fruitless search for work.

All this, we submit, is not only tragic, but absurd, for it is taking place in the U. S. of America, the richest country on the face of the earth, the richest nation in all human history. Furthermore, it is taking place, as we are solemnly assured, not because there is a shortage of the goods necessary to sustain human life in decency and comfort, but because there is an over-abundance. We have six million grown-ups unemployed and six million children suffering from under-nourishment, not because there is no food, but because there is too much! We have invented new machinery capable of producing goods in fabulous abundance. With this machinery coal miners have gone into the depths of the earth and brought forth millions of tons of black wealth. Textile and garment workers have made cloth and clothing in abundance. Building trades workers have erected skyscrapers, schools and

### Do We Need A New Political Organization In The United States?

#### FOREWORD

Do we have in the United States today an effective workers' political organization, dedicated to abolishing our plan-less, profiteering, war-provoking capitalism, and establishing a workers' republic? If not, could some existing party, such as the Socialist or Communist, be readily fitted to meet the need? Or should the attempt be made to form a new organization? What would such an organization be like? Such questions as these are raised in the statement which follows.

The statement is issued in order to stimulate discussion of an issue which is at once important, pressing and delicate. The aim is not to add to the confusion in the American labor movement but if possible to clarify thinking; not to set up one more division but to develop more solidarity and drive among elements making for a common goal. Surely no one will contend that the existing situation in the American labor movement is entirely satisfactory and that thorough analysis and discussion may not result in clearer understanding of issues, and more militant and intelligent action.

The statement was drafted by a special committee appointed by the national executive committee of the Conference for Progressive Labor Action. The national executive committee adopted the statement and voted to send it out as a basis for discussion. Careful reading

will indicate that it does not commit the C. P. L. A. to any specific action other than the initiation of a discussion in labor circles. It was definitely understood, moreover, that individual members of the national executive were free, in the ensuing discussion, to defend or oppose parts of the statement, including those setting forth criticism of existing parties.

A meeting of the executive of the New York branch of the C. P. L. A. similarly adopted the statement as a basis for discussion. Recently a meeting of the membership of the New York branch voted by an overwhelming majority to approve the plan to promote a widespread discussion of the problem of effective labor political activity. By a decisive, though considerably smaller, majority, the meeting approved of the present statement as a basis for such discussion. A considerable number of members dissented vigorously from the criticism of the Socialist Party; a few questioned the usefulness of the statement on other grounds.

The National Executive Committee invites criticisms and suggestions from all sides. It will be pleased to hear from those who think a new organization is needed and who would be willing to work in one. It will likewise, welcome communications in opposition to such a proposal. To the extent of its resources and opportunities, it will give publicity to all pertinent material.

houses. Farmers have raised billions of bushels of wheat and other foods. And the result of all the inventiveness, the skill and the toil of these American masses, is that miners do not have coal to warm their own shacks, textile and garment workers go ill-clad, building trades workers do not know where the rent is coming from, and the farmer sits on top of his pile of wheat starving. American workers may actually before long, with the

collapse of our "advanced" and complex economy, face mass hunger and mass misery in more acute form than the workers in less "advanced" countries. A system under which these things are possible deserves the scorn of all thinking men, as surely as it deserves the hatred of those who suffer and are exploited under it.

It is an utterly false notion that by being optimistic and patching a little here and there we can make our eco-

economic system really workable, and abolish such evils as war and unemployment which it brings in its train. Seventeen years ago the race of capitalist nations for colonies, markets and profits plunged us into the most frightful and costly war in all history. Since we have not fundamentally changed our economic system, the world today is still an armed camp. The United States, after signing the Kellogg Pact renouncing war, is spending more money in war preparations this year than ever before, and the tension in international affairs is greater than in the fateful years before the outbreak of the Great War, although the masses everywhere hate and detest war.

After every depression and panic in American history we have eventually entered a new boom period, and have then lulled ourselves into the dream that it would last forever. Many believe that the present crisis also will pass; we shall "turn the corner". But the depression becomes more severe as time passes. The present one is world-wide, and there are no factors in sight on which to base hopes of a permanent and broad recovery. In a country as young as the United States, and with such unrivalled natural advantages, there are not only six million unemployed during a depression, there were at a minimum one and a half million unemployed during the very height of the recent boom period, and such basic industries as farming, coal and textiles were in a state of collapse. Already capitalist industrialism has brought to us, as it has to England and Germany, a permanent army of unemployed and a number of incurably sick industries.

### **The System Cannot Be Made to Work**

The fact is that the private-profit, private-property, competitive system is unworkable in the twentieth century, and has become essentially destructive rather than a force for releasing human energies and raising human standards. Under this profit system we concentrate two-thirds of our wealth in the hands of less than 10 per cent of our people. Less than two per cent of the gainfully occupied receive 20 per cent of the national income each year, and 80 per cent of all the dividends paid. Five hundred four persons, with annual incomes of a million dollars or over, together get enough income each year to pay all the wages of the more than 300,000 transportation workers on our railroads, and have a tidy sum of \$800,000 each left over. Thus the

masses are left unable to buy the things they have produced, the processes of production are stopped, the new inventions of science, which might add immeasurably to the well-being of the people, either go unused or serve to speed up the silly and stupid business of piling up surpluses which cannot be consumed.

There is no remedy for this except in giving the masses the purchasing power which will enable them to consume what they have produced, but that remedy is not available under a system which is built on the idea of letting private individuals reap profits, i.e., surpluses, from industry.

Furthermore, our present economic system cannot work in the 20th century, because under the complex conditions of our machine age, production has to be planned on a world-scale, at the very least a national scale, to fit the needs of the consuming population. Otherwise we are likely to be drowned in the flood of goods poured out by our mass production industries. The underlying idea of the present system, however, is that of private initiative and private control in business, rather than social engineering and control, which is to say that our present system (or better, lack of system) is using horse-and-buggy methods in the airplane age.

### **Need of a Planned Economy**

The American people must make and carry out a Plan for their economic life. Under this Plan the fabulous resources of the continent will be used, not wasted. The masses of those who do the nation's work will labor to create security, plenty, leisure and freedom for each other, not profits, privileges and arbitrary power for a few. America will be for American workers, not for a handful of profiteers, corporation executives, bankers and idle rich wasters. The lords and autocrats of finance and industry and the hangers-on whom they have supported in idleness and luxury, will go the way of all Kaisers and Czars, the way the Hohenzollerns, the Romanoffs, the Hapsburgs, and King Alfonso have gone. Senseless class-distinctions of rich and poor, boss and slave will vanish. In the workers' republic under a planned economy, democracy will be a reality and not a sham.

The Plan for America's Economic Life must fit into a Plan for a World-Economy, which shall put an end to the rivalries of nationalists, militarists and imperialists. Thus, and only thus, may war be abolished and the workers

of all the earth achieve a sane and peaceful existence.

The Plan must be made and put to work soon. Before long the men and women, most of all the youth, who do America's work must decide to take control of their own destinies, must work out a rational plan for running our vast economic machine, and must organize to achieve power so that their Plan may be adopted and put into effect. Otherwise, when the next crisis overtakes us—as a result of the dragging out of the present depression, or of a new depression a few years hence, or a revolution in some important industrial country, or an upheaval in China or India, or a war—American labor will be caught unprepared, and either a Fascist dictatorship will fasten itself upon us, or the engines of modern warfare will wipe out American civilization altogether.

### **Master-Minding?**

We desire to emphasize that this statement is not an appeal to our "master minds" of politics, industry and finance to come to the rescue, or to business to "put its own house in order." We are not impressed by those "master minds" who plunged the world into a hideous war in 1914, and fifteen years later into an unprecedented economic depression. They did nothing effective, as has frequently been pointed out, to warn the people about the coming of the depression or to prevent it. Either they did not foresee what was coming; or they foresaw and did not care to try to save the nation from the suffering in store; or they foresaw and cared, but were unable to do anything effective. In any case, there is nothing to inspire confidence in their leadership. Nor is there any evidence that this leadership has inaugurated any large-scale and statesmanlike effort to prevent another catastrophe a few years hence.

Under our economic system a business man must make profits or go under. It is highly unrealistic to expect that these very men taught to function under a profit system will undermine and abolish that system. Under this system prestige, privilege, luxury, power belong to the industrial and financial leaders and their hangers-on. They are a class, and are conscious of it. They understand that fundamental changes in our economic system would truly equalize opportunity, would out class distinctions, would mean a genuine democracy in which no industrial and financial barons would be tolerated, and they are not likely as a class of their own volition to make, or even consent to, those changes.



A Planned Economy for the United States will have to be built by those who stand to gain, materially and spiritually, by the change. Those who do the work of this country, industrial, agricultural, clerical, technical, professional, and who are cheated of the livelihood, the security and the leisure which should be the fruit of their toil, must themselves provide the will, the courage and the intelligence for the task.

### All Power to Labor

To achieve their purpose, the workers must have power. To gain power, they must organize. Effective labor organization in the modern world includes militant industrial unionism, a working-class political party, cooperative enterprises and a labor culture. While this statement deals primarily with the problem of labor political action, its starting point and base is the idea of a single living labor movement operating in closely related fields — trade union, political, cooperative and cultural.

Sooner or later we must build in the U. S. a mass labor party, based primarily on the industrial workers and including all other elements which are cheated of their rights under our present system. For the moment the forces required to build such a party do not seem to exist. It must be borne in mind, however, that we live in a period when changes in the labor scene may come swiftly.

A political organization is immediately needed, however, to carry on the educational and organizational work preliminary to the building of a mass labor party, and once such a party is formed to work within it in order that the mass party may not fall into opportunism and may move as directly and swiftly as possible toward its true goal, a new economic order.

### What Kind of Political Organization?

What would be the structure, composition and program of such a political organization?

It would aim to be a unifying and not a sectarian and dividing force in the labor political field. It would keep in the forefront the purpose of uniting all possible forces in a mass labor party, and would accordingly in no case run candidates in opposition to the candidates of a mass labor or farmer-labor party where such is in existence. It would, however, take part regularly in political campaigns, setting forth its position on the issues involved, and arousing the masses to mil-

itant activity, since political campaigns furnish an opportunity for education and agitation among the masses second only to that provided by union organization campaigns, strikes, etc.

Where no mass labor party was in the field, the organization would run its own candidates for office whenever its resources permitted and its basic aim of education, agitation and the development of labor militancy and solidarity could be advanced thereby. Where a mass labor party was in existence, the organization would work loyally within it, seek to advance a sound, radical program, and to secure the nomination by the mass party of candidates who could be counted upon to advance such a program.

It would recognize frankly the fact that the possessing and ruling class in America today is carrying on a desperate struggle—from fear of change and from self interest—to maintain the present private-profit, private-property, competitive system, broken down though it be, and in this struggle meet every effort of the masses of the people to improve their condition, to assert their rights and to build a better world, with the most brutal terrorism, discharge from the job, injunctions, yellow-dog contracts, labor spies and provocateurs, thugs, coal and iron police, and militia. The organization would seek to give leadership and inspiration to the workers in their struggle to free themselves from this tyranny, and to achieve a workers' republic in which there shall be plenty, justice, and freedom for all.

The membership would consist of active and militant men and women, especially young men and women, who are prepared to give time to its activities, and to undergo the training and discipline necessary for arduous working-class activity.

Industrial workers would furnish the basis of the membership. Agricultural, clerical, technical and professional workers would also be eligible. There would be no discrimination on the ground of sex, race or color. Exploiters of labor would not be eligible for membership.

The organization would have local, district, state and national units, and would be governed by a plan of democratic centralism; that is to say, decisions as to policy would be arrived at by free and thorough party discussion, and would then be carried out by the respective units in a disciplined manner.

An important auxiliary might be an advisory research board of experts in engineering, economics, finance, city planning, cooperation, etc. Such a

board might also give technical advice on industrial trends, the issues in political campaigns, etc. It might also, for educational purposes, draw plans as to how the resources of the U. S. might be used for the benefit of the masses under a planned economy, and the technical steps which might be taken by labor if it achieved power in order to execute such concrete plans.

Though it may be sufficiently clear from what has already been said, we emphasize again that the organization of which we are speaking would simply be one of the instruments—the central instrument, if it fulfills its function—in the struggle which the working masses of the nation carry on. It would link itself especially closely with the daily industrial struggle of the workers in the basic industries to improve their conditions, combat injunctions and yellow-dog contracts, etc. Its members in the shops, mines and unions would seek to give inspiration and leadership in such struggles.

We do not think of this labor struggle as a simple and polite affair in which labor has only to form a political party, win more and more votes at each election, eventually get a parliamentary majority and then vote a new economic order into existence, retaining for the most part our present political machinery, legislative, executive and judicial. The press, the radio, the pulpit, the courts, the police, the control of the job, are today almost entirely in the hands of the possessing classes, the so-called advocates of law and order. Though they consent occasionally to slight reforms, provided they retain their reality of power and the right to profits, for the most part they make increasingly lawless and violent use of the institutions which they control. Unless the American workers choose subjection to a Fascist dictatorship of big business and finance, they must oppose this lawlessness and tyranny by struggle on every front—industrial, political, cooperative and educational—and with a realistic use of such methods as can accomplish their final emancipation. They must depend upon their own organized strength, rather than on the machinery of a capitalistic government.

When labor achieves power it will build a functional democracy, with occupational representation in legislative bodies, with the franchise in the hands of those who do the nation's work, and the co-ordination of the nation's economic life the chief responsibility of the supreme political organs.

One hundred fifty-five years ago the Declaration of Independence spoke of

the right to "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness," and added: "To secure these rights, governments are instituted among men. Whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or abolish it, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their safety and happiness." This task of devising political instruments under which the economic, social and cultural life of the people might flourish, our forefathers did not shirk in their day. Workers of America must now perform a similar task under the vastly altered conditions of the twentieth century.

For the present the organization under discussion would not affiliate with any of the existing labor internationals. It would, however, stand for world unity of labor on the political as well as the economic field, and seek ways and means of bringing about such unity. It would relentlessly oppose all militaristic and imperialistic efforts to weaken or destroy the Soviet regime.

This is not the place to set down in detail the concrete, immediate items in the program for which the organization might stand if it existed, but a few items that might find a place in such a program may be mentioned for illustrative purposes. They would include.

Public ownership and democratic control of all basic industries.

A nation-wide program of social insurance against the risk of sickness, accident, unemployment and old age.

Drastic increases in income (upper brackets) and inheritance taxes.

Total disarmament (though it would not entertain any false hope that this could be accomplished without the abolition of the capitalist system).

Abolition of yellow-dog contracts and of the use of injunctions in labor disputes.

A national minimum wage.

Recognition of Soviet Russia.

Abolition of discrimination against Negroes, etc.

Withdrawal of American troops from the soil of other nations.

Philippine independence.

## Socialists and Communists?

There is considerable doubt as to whether any existing political organization meets these needs of American workers today, though we recognize in each of these organizations honest and healthy elements.

The Socialist Party in the United States today does not have a clear

working class orientation. It has not, as a matter of fact, succeeded in winning the confidence of American workers. Some of its exponents have frankly abandoned Marxism as a labor philosophy, and have no philosophy to offer in its place. Others profess to retain Marxism, but exhibit no militancy in carrying on the class struggle. It pursues a policy of "neutrality" toward the trade unions, which in practice amounts to leaving them in the hands of bureaucrats and corruptionists, makes it possible for a man to be regarded as a good Socialist on the political field, while he is a reactionary on the trade union field, and makes it impossible to distinguish between the so-called Socialist unions and any other. It has lacked vigor and aggressiveness in supporting, inspiring and leading efforts to organize the masses of unskilled and semi-skilled workers in the basic industries. Its propaganda tacitly assumes that by a gradual democratic process the basic industries of the nation can be bought from their present owners and socialized, and evades any realistic analysis of the modern scene to determine what foundation there is for such an expectation. It is confused and at times distinctly antagonistic in its attitude toward Soviet Russia. It is not aggressive and militant in its struggle against militarism. It is not out-and-out Socialist, neither has it yet demonstrated that it can be an effective left-progressive American party.

The Communist Party in the United States today suffers from a mechanical dictation from outside which severely handicaps it in dealing with the American situation. Its roots are not primarily in the American soil. It has pursued a divisive and sectarian policy in the trade unions. It has abandoned any honest effort to build a mass labor party. It talks a fantastic and doctrinaire language which American workers do not understand. It over-reaches itself and tries to impose Communist dogmatism on the workers, rather than gaining their confidence and developing their initiative by giving them a realistic and democratic leadership in their daily struggles.

Whatever may be the validity of these criticisms of existing political organizations professing to serve the workers and farmers, it is a fact that there are a considerable number of workers and those interested in the aims of labor, who do not now have any political organization in which they find it possible to function enthusiastically, and confidently.

We raise these questions, then, as to whether a political organization such

as we have outlined is needed, and whether any existing organization meets, or might readily be fitted to meet, the situation. We invite a dispassionate and thorough discussion of these questions, not in order to add to the confusion in the American labor movement, but in the hope that issues may be clarified; not in order to create one more division, but for the sake of achieving a higher measure of solidarity, unity and drive than now exists. Surely no one can contend that the present situation is satisfactory, and that a thorough analysis and far-reaching discussion are not needed. No one who believes that only the workers can in the last analysis build a workers' republic, can doubt that the outlook in America is indeed dark unless revolutionary changes and advances occur in existing labor organizations, or new instrumentalities, political and otherwise, are speedily planned and built.

## The Three American Revolutions

There have been three major struggles in American history. The first came to a head in the Revolutionary War. That struggle decided that the United States was not to be a colony raising food and raw materials, and providing a market for the capitalists of Great Britain.

The second struggle came to a head in the Civil War. This struggle decided that the United States was not to be controlled by a slave-owning feudal aristocracy, and gave free scope to competitive capitalism to exploit our vast resources and to build a modern industrial system.

The third and most important struggle in American history is going on today. Its issue will determine whether American workers shall become enslaved to an industrial and financial feudalism far more powerful and far more destructive of human freedom than any which has gone before, or whether they shall control in their own interest the nation's fabulous resources and mighty productive mechanism, utilize to the full the powers which modern science places in their hands, and consciously plan a social order in which all men shall have plenty, leisure and freedom.

## National Executive Member Accepts Statement with Reservations

As a member of the National Executive Committee of the C.P.L.A., I favor issuing the foregoing statement.  
(Continued on page 28)

# Paterson Silk Workers Strike!

ON Tuesday, July 28th at 10 o'clock in the morning, Paterson silk workers were called out on a mass strike by the Joint Action Committee composed of representatives of the United Textile Workers' Locals in Paterson, Associated Silk Workers and the C. P. L. A. The strike call represented the culmination of months of effort in which C. P. L. A. took an active part, and about which our members and other readers of Labor Age ought to have the correct conception.

For years the union situation in the Paterson silk industry has been in confusion and efforts at organization have been ineffective because there have been a number of competing unions in the field. The honest workers didn't know whom to follow; and the indifferent and dishonest had a good excuse for not joining anyone. The chief organizations were several locals of the United Textile Workers, largely confined to the more skilled crafts, such as, loom-fixers, twisters, and warpers, and an independent union called the Associated Silk Workers which claimed jurisdiction over the entire silk industry, but actually figured among the ribbon and hat band workers and the broad silk weavers.

Back in 1928, left-wingers in Paterson, then operating under the slogan of the United Front, enlisted the cooperation of Chairman A. J. Muste in an effort to bring together these various organizations. Chairman Muste was invited to become "impartial chairman" of conferences between representatives of the two groups, which proved successful. A plan for amalgamation under the U. T. W. was adopted. At the last minute, however, the left-wing elements in Paterson who had initiated this movement, decided to break it up; the Communist Party had abandoned the United Front policy and adopted in its stead the policy of building its own Communist unions!

Some months ago, representatives of the Paterson movement again came to Chairman Muste and Brother Budenz, described the wretched conditions existing among the silk workers—wages had been cut no less than 40 per cent in the last three or four years, and the eight hour day had been completely lost in the broad silk shops which operate anywhere from 48 to

60 hours per week when there is work—and asked the C. P. L. A. to interest itself in an organization campaign for these workers. Such a call could not be lightly turned down.

The C. P. L. A. laid down certain conditions, however, for effective action in the Paterson situation.

## Conditions for Effective Action

1. The existing U. T. W. locals and the Associated Silk Workers must be amalgamated. Such a demonstration of unity would encourage the workers tremendously.

2. For the sake of achieving as broad a unity as possible, the amalgamated organization must be in the U. T. W. and thus connected with the American labor movement, but in order that national trade union officials should not be in a position to cripple militant organization activity or to make questionable strike settlements for Paterson silk workers, we stipulated that the U. T. W. must definitely allow the Paterson silk workers together with those in Allentown and elsewhere to establish an autonomous federation of silk workers within the U. T. W. similar to the Full Fashioned Hosiery Workers' Federation.

3. Accompanying and following the movement to amalgamate existing unions, there must be a vigorous campaign of organization and education among the workers, leading up to a general strike.

4. Close connections must be established between the Paterson workers and the Allentown strikers, and the two situations regarded as essentially one.

The C. P. L. A. had in mind also making contacts among rank and file silk workers in Paterson and so building up a rank and file group of C. P. L. A.'ers which would put vigor into the old organizations, get rid of such officials as prove themselves unworthy or no longer capable of handling the situation, develop educational activities, etc.

The numerous activities into which the C. P. L. A. has been called in

recent months, together with our small staff and restricted finances, caused some delay from our side in tackling the Paterson situation. However, presently conferences were held in the C. P. L. A. office in which members of the U. T. W. and the Associated Silk Workers participated. Eli Keller who had been at one time national secretary of the National Textile Workers Union, but had been expelled from that union, and who is now a silk worker in Paterson, and Ben Gitlow, a member of the organization committee of the American Fund for Public Service, were also present. An appeal of the various groups to the American Fund for Public Service for an appropriation of \$3,000 for organization work in Paterson was successful. A sub-committee of the Fund was authorized to release the money as soon as the amalgamation movement got under way and organization activities were launched.

About two months ago, conferences toward bringing about amalgamation actually began in Paterson. The Paterson unionists asked A. J. Muste to serve as chairman of the conferences, and Louis F. Budenz as secretary. In the absence of Chairman Muste in the Middle West, Brother Budenz acted as chairman of the joint conferences. A plan for amalgamating the Paterson unions was drawn up and the official sanction of the U. T. W. for the establishment of an autonomous silk workers federation obtained. The amalgamation movement culminated on Friday evening, July 17, when the Associated Silk Workers voted to adopt the plan to affiliate with the U. T. W.

In the meantime, the committee handling the amalgamation plan gradually also became a Joint Action Committee for carrying on organization work and preparing for a general strike. In all this, there were irritating delays for which U. T. W. and A. S. W. representatives seemed about equally to blame, and which were all the more unfortunate because the Allentown strike was being drawn out and so more and more in need of support from an organization and strike movement in Paterson.

## Communists Rush In

Just as the amalgamation negotiations were drawing to a successful

close, the Communists suddenly became very active in the silk situation. First they concentrated on Allentown and owing to the slackness of U. T. W. officials, captured two Allentown strike meetings. They got the Allentown strikers to vote for "a united front rank and file movement" with Paterson. They then took 100 or more Allentown strikers to Paterson over the week-end and sought by a whirlwind campaign to take charge of the Paterson situation and precipitate a National Textile Workers' strike there, although they had practically no roots among the Paterson workers. For these tactics of splitting and capturing in Allentown, there is no excuse whatever. The slow progress of the amalgamation negotiations and organization activities in Paterson, did give some excuse to the N. T. W. for injecting itself into that situation.

While maintaining that the workers in Paterson had nothing substantial to hope for from the leadership of the N. T. W. which had similarly injected itself into an Associated Silk Workers' strike in 1928 and pretty well discredited itself among Paterson workers, the C. P. L. A. representatives on the Joint Action Committee insisted that both the situation in Paterson and the need of the Allentown strikers for support, required swift action on the part of the Joint Action Committee, so that the Paterson silk workers might be united and might have definite proof of vigorous leadership in which they could trust. Under pressure from our representatives, the Joint Action Committee on Monday, July 20, voted to call a general strike for August 3. The National Textile Workers, seeking to force the situation, independently called a strike for Wednesday, July 22.

At the Joint Action Committee meeting on July 21, the C.P.L.A. representatives insisted that we must not be a party to creating confusion among the workers in Paterson, that it would lead to bitterness and despair if some workers were on strike and others were told to keep in, virtually scabbing on them, and that therefore our strike date should be advanced. The U.T.W. representatives in particular objected that they had not yet obtained authority from their locals for such precipitate action. The C.P.L.A. representatives pointed out that we were confronted with a grave emergency and that under the circumstances, courageous emergency action ought to be taken. However, the Joint Action Committee that evening found itself unable to agree on advancing the date

of the strike. Thereupon, the C.P.L.A. representatives announced that they would be compelled to withdraw temporarily from official connection with the Joint Action Committee. They agreed, however, that in view of the delicacy of the situation, they would make no public statement that day, but would attend the meeting of the committee the next evening and be guided in their future course by the decisions arrived at at this meeting.

The following day, the N.T.W. strike call went into effect. Very few workers responded to the call. It was clear that the N.T.W. did not have a real hold on the Paterson workers and that these workers were looking to the amalgamated movement led by the Joint Action Committee for leadership.

That night, a new spirit was shown in the Joint Action Committee. The U.T.W. representatives agreed immediately to call meetings of their locals and to ask that they be clothed with full power including authority to advance the strike date if necessary. Arrangements were made for immediate distribution of leaflets among the workers, outdoor meetings, etc. A meeting was also called for Monday, July 27, of all organized workers to make detailed plans for the conduct of an effective strike. It was agreed furthermore, that members of the Joint Action Committee would do nothing to induce workers to remain at work while others were on strike.

During the next couple of days, several more shops came out on strike, some of them in sympathy with the N.T.W., others in sympathy with the other group.

On Saturday afternoon, July 25, the Joint Action Committee met in an emergency session. All the locals reported that their representatives had been given full emergency power. Thereupon, the general strike date was advanced to 10 o'clock on Tuesday morning, July 28, and hours were spent in arranging for presentation of demands, distribution of leaflets, arrangement of mass meetings, and other strike activities.

### Principal Strike Demands

The principal demands in the strike are the restoration of the eight hour day, abolition of overtime, not less than 35 per cent increase in piece-rates for broad silk weavers, proportionate increases for auxiliary help, a minimum of \$24 per week for dyers' help-

ers, the union scale for all loom-fixers, etc., and recognition of the union.

Militants and progressives should rally to the support of the Paterson strike movement. The conditions among the silk workers are such that it is utterly impossible for them to survive without an effort to better these conditions and to consolidate their ranks.

The fundamentals of correct policy in this situation must be carefully kept in mind. They are as follows:

1. The details of the amalgamation of the U.T.W. locals and the A.S.W. must be worked out as rapidly as possible in order that after the strike, there may be a single organization to represent the workers in the shops.
2. The strike must be carried on in a vigorous and militant fashion leading up to honestly made settlements. Insofar as complete victory may not be possible, there must be a frank admission that economic conditions have in part defeated the workers and that they must rally their forces for future struggles.
3. Close and effective contact must be maintained with the Allentown situation.
4. Steps for the actual establishment of the autonomous national federation of silk workers must be taken at the earliest possible moment. If necessary, conferences to this end must be held even during the strike.
5. Vigorous and militant rank and file elements must be drawn into C.P.L.A. groups, must be trained in union activity and inspired to work constantly for the development among the silk workers of an all-around progressive labor movement.

## ALL DAY C P L A PICNIC TO BROOKWOOD Sunday, August 16

60 Acres of Beautiful Woodland  
Swimming Hiking Dancing  
Tennis Volley Ball Baseball  
A 40-Mile Auto Ride  
A Wonderful Day's Outing

**Reservations \$1.50**

Conference for Progressive Labor  
Action

104 FIFTH AVENUE, N. Y. CITY  
Wanted C.P.L.A. supporters and  
friends with automobiles to volun-  
teer their cars.



# Sooner Starve A-Strikin' Than Starve A-Workin'

By HELEN G. NORTON

THE strike of West Virginia mine workers, foreshadowed in the last issue of *LABOR AGE*, began July 6. On that day, reports from 23 communities showed 4,108 men on strike and 474 scabbing, with 14 mines completely closed and all but three of the others badly crippled. There are now between 7,000 and 8,000 on strike and coal production is badly crippled. Exact figures cannot be obtained because of the difficulties of communication. Telephones are almost non-existent, postoffices in company stores are closed to strikers, and the only way many committees can report is to walk 15 or 20 miles into Charleston. Local secretaries are too busy signing up new men to turn in a complete roll of their members.

The strike has been fairly quiet. That is to say, men are arrested every day, families receive eviction notices or are evicted every day, company guards and state troopers interfere with picket lines every day, new members are signed every day, the importation of scabs is attempted every day, people are starving every day, and the piles of reserve coal at the mines grow smaller every day. But aside from the killing of two scabs in Putnam County—by company gunmen the union claims—there has been no sensational violence to make big news in the papers.

To be sure, Mrs. Charles Seacrist of Hugheston is in her grave with her unborn child because she saw a constable kick and knock down her neighbor, Mrs. Chris Deviti, who objected to having her furniture thrown out on the road, and Mrs. Deviti herself is still in danger of having a miscarriage; but coal miners' wives aren't important and have no business being shocked to death at due process of law.

Relief, a big problem in any strike, is paramount in this one. Company stores, the sole source of supply in many camps, are, of course, closed to the strikers. Since the only money they ever have is company "scrip," they cannot buy elsewhere or even get credit. They are completely dependent upon the union for food. The union during the first two weeks of the strike spent nearly \$10,000 for food alone. And this means barely enough to sustain life in people accus-

tomed to live at the edge of starvation. A family of five is entitled to 10 pounds of flour, 4½ of fat salt pork, 4½ pounds of pinto beans, a pound of coffee, 2½ pounds of sugar, a little baking powder and salt. Try feeding your family on this for a week and see how far it goes. Yet multiply these amounts by 7,500, the approximate number of men on strike, and see what enormous quantities of food the union must buy each week. And there are more families of six to 11 than of five or less.

Soup kitchens and relief depots are out of the question. The strike area lies in a radius of 40 miles in all directions from Charleston. Relief trucks are going day and night, chugging over the mountains, snorting up the "cricks" and "hollers" to desolate little camps where crowds of half-starved, anxious men and women and children have been waiting for hours, straining their eyes at each cloud of dust that betokens an approaching car. With what anxiety they watch the local relief committee apportion the supplies, and with what disappointment they often hear that this is not the whole order and some must still go hungry!

## Milk For the Babies

Milk for the babies is an additional problem. Not pastuerized milk, if you please, or Grade-A milk fresh from contented cows, but canned milk—condensed milk, vitamine-less milk, which is all the children of West Virginia miners ever see. Put your baby on a scanty diet of canned milk with a bacon rind to chew and a spoonful of brown beans now and then. But throw away your weight-chart first, and blind your eyes to the pale cheeks and spindley legs. Throw away all your baby's layette but two old dresses and two flour-sack diapers. Let her play on the coal pile and around the garbage can where flies are thickest. Learn to regard soap as a forbidden and coveted luxury.

Then perhaps you will see why, when miners say, "We'd sooner starve a-strikin' than starve a-workin'," their gaunt wives nod grim assent, knowing

that even when their men-folks work, there is an ever-increasing debt at the company store; knowing that from every car of coal their men-folk mine, the company takes its toll in short weight and dockage; knowing that the service of the company doctor, for which every miner is docked each month, may be withheld at the whim of the all-powerful company; knowing that the very roof over their heads, leaky and tottering as it is, is theirs only at the pleasure of the company and that any day the dread "house notice" may come which means that unless the union can interpose legal delays, their shabby beds and straw ticks, their shakey tables and cracked dishes will be thrown out on the public road or the creek bottom before the week is over.

This is a strike in despair. Seven years ago, these miners of West Virginia made good wages as wages go. Harry Mooney of Sharon showed me payslips for 1923 running \$80 and \$90 for two weeks' work. His last two weeks, at the same job, brought him \$10.40.

Blame the change on the world situation, blame it on inevitable technological changes, blame it on the capitalist system—the coal miners of West Virginia know only that when they had a union with Frank Keeney as district president, they could live like human beings, even in the feudalistic company towns; and that since John L. Lewis and the coal operators between them have destroyed the union, they live like slaves—except that under slavery, masters took care of their aged and injured workers. Now that Frank Keeney and others of their old leaders are attempting to build up a union once more, they rally to the cause. And when they were asked to vote as to whether they would strike to compel the operators to negotiate with the union or whether they would abandon the idea of unionism altogether, they voted to strike. And they are striking.

Only one thing can defeat them—hunger. Only one thing can relieve hunger—food. Only one thing will buy food—money.

# The Belleville Convention

**T**HE movement to build an honest and militant miners' union with control taken out of the hands of an autocratic machine and restored to the membership, took another important step forward in Illinois last month. Nearly 75 per cent of the membership of the Illinois District U.M.W. of A. was represented by regularly accredited delegates from local unions at a Rank and File Miners Convention which convened at Belleville, Ill. on July 6 and remained in session for two weeks.

From the standpoint of the actual power represented at this convention, the most important fact is that in it two groups came to an understanding and found it possible to work together. On the one hand, the group which had stuck to Howat and Hapgood in the Reorganized U.M.W. of A. movement and which was perhaps primarily interested in ousting John L. Lewis and Company from control in the International. On the other hand, the Southern Illinois group which had kept out of the Reorganized movement, not because it had any great faith in Lewis, but because it considered the Farrington-Fishwick-Walker District machine just as vicious as Lewis and wanted to get rid of it first. Now that these two elements are working enthusiastically together, it is hard to see how they can be stopped. It looks as though the Walker regime in District 12 could not survive unless a miracle happens, and that Lewis's hold in the bituminous at least is bound soon to get a death blow.

The most significant actions of the Convention are brought out in a statement issued on July 13 and in Resolution No. 60. The statement reads:

## Latest Developments Among Illinois Miners

(By Miner Correspondents)

"In order to set at rest the many conflicting rumors and mis-statements relative to the status of the Rank and File Miners District No. 12, U. M. W. of A., by reason of the action of the convention, the following statement is being published as being the true status at this time. The Rank and File Miners movement in convention assembled has taken definite action to not at any time recognize the National Miners Union as an organization. Further, that this movement recognize the principle and need of a Rank and File International organization, but in no uncertain terms has taken action to not recognize the officials or their associates of the present International Union. That we at no time recognize John H. Walker and his associates as being the regularly elected officers of District 12, U. M. W. of A. Further action has been taken that the name of this organization composed of the men employed in and around the mines in the State of Illinois, shall be known as the Rank and File Miners of District No. 12, U. M. W. of A., and will be under the jurisdiction of the Rank and File International Union when such is established. Further, that we consider this Rank and File organization separate and apart from the organization which John H. Walker contends he is the official District President of, and John L. Lewis the International President."

Resolution No. 60 was introduced by James Haynes and Wm. Stoffels of Local Union 721, Pana, Ill. Haynes is the veteran of miners' struggles who served as president of the so-called Howat National Convention held in St. Louis in April and reported in earlier issues of *LABOR AGE*. Bill Stoffels is a Brookwood graduate and active member of the C.P.L.A.

Resolution No. 60 as adopted by the Convention with only a single dissenting vote, reads as follows:

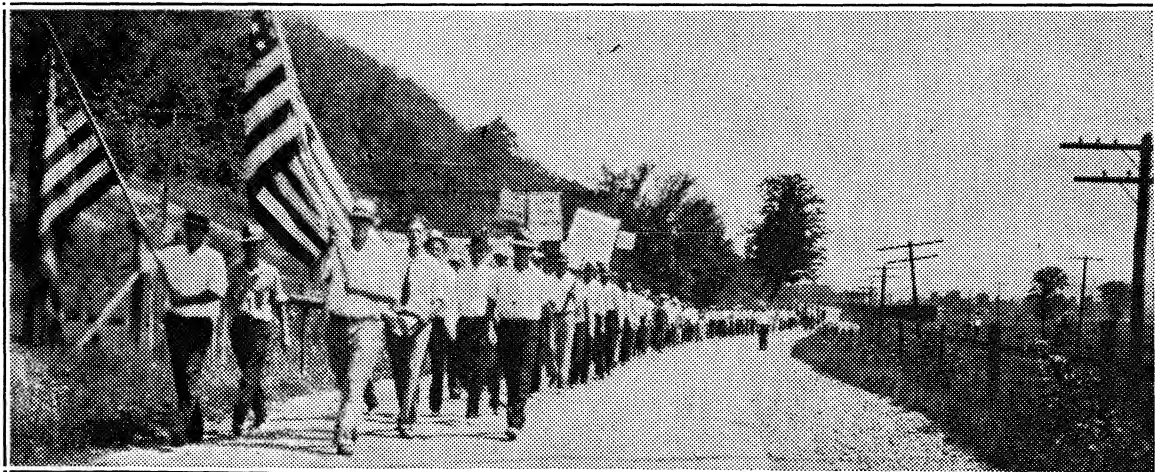
"Whereas, the salvation of the miners can only be brought about by their own effort, and

"Whereas, division among the miners of Illinois will continue to exist so long as one group clings to present district officials, and another to present international officials, and unity can be brought about only if the miners clean house all down the line and get rid of those corrupt and inefficient officials who have misled, divided, and betrayed us;

"Therefore Be It Resolved, that this convention direct all Local Unions of Illinois miners to stop paying dues immediately to John Walker and John L. Lewis, since all such monies are used to betray miners in W. Virginia, Kentucky, Pennsylvania and elsewhere, and also to destroy the Illinois organization, and,

"Be It Further Resolved, that the officers of the Illinois Rank and File miners' organization constituted by this convention take steps as soon as possible to get in touch with all other Local and District organizations of miners throughout the country, to the end that an International Rank and File convention may be held at which locals, regardless of previous affiliation (Continued on page 28)

Striking coal miners of the West Virginia Mine Workers Union march on Raymond City to call out workers



# Legal Terror in Kentucky

By ARNOLD JOHNSON

**W**HEN Sheriff J. H. Blair declared war against the union organizers with the order, "Shoot to kill," his small army of deputized gunmen were ready. For a period of years operators and officials had prepared to crush any last stand of unions to establish themselves in the Harlan County field. Notorious gunmen and fearless murderers who came up for trial were watched by operators with an eye to their future usefulness. Short term sentences and pardons sold these men to the powers in control when the crisis came. According to a local official, two men were pardoned from the West Virginia penitentiary, and bond was put up for a murderer to come to Harlan County to break any solidarity of the workers.

Brutalities, however, such as jabbing workers with guns, ordering them away from public places such as the post office, and intimidating threats, soon created a rebellious attitude among the miners against the officials and operators and their deputized gunmen. They now began to realize that their only hope from complete serfdom was organization and concerted action. Sheriff Blair, seeing that the men were going to fight back, purchased nine machine guns, a number of steel vests and other implements of capitalistic justice, and deputized a Chicago gunman to teach his rustic thugs how to use them. But Kentucky miners are not easily frightened with guns.

Hence when one coal company fired 300 men for belonging to the United Mine Workers of America or for showing union sympathy, and proceeded to drive them out of their homes and the mining camp in violation of State law and human decency the miners began to rebel. Thousands walked out on strike with literally "nothing to lose but their chains."

But hunger and oppression, failure of aid to come from the outside, and continued threats from officials drove the miners into desperate straits. Shelter was provided by friends, but food was scarce. Stores were pilfered. Organized bands went out begging for food which was not an easy task, but was easier than listening to crying

children and watching flesh waste away. Scabs were imported from surrounding areas to threaten the union men with permanent loss of work. Houses were burned, some say by the striking miners, but those acquainted with tactics used by the bosses in the class struggle say the deputies did it in order to create trouble. Homes of union men were riddled with bullets. Harlan County became the scene of a reign of terror.

## Miners Fight Back

Then the miners began to fight back. A group of deputies, without a warrant, attempted to arrest a union man. Not knowing what the deputies were going to do to him and believing in his right to see a warrant, he opened fire on the deputy who approached him, then ran. The deputy was killed and the miner was shot in the legs by the other deputies shooting under a railroad car.

The Evarts battle, in which three deputies were killed, one miner killed and two deputies wounded, is another of the events of this historic struggle not yet closed. Threats by the deputies to bring scabs through Evarts to break the union, and the brutal treatment of miners by deputies incited this outbreak. About who was in the battle, little is known. But it is known that Daniels, one of the deputies killed, was the most brutal and hated man in Harlan County. Operators and officials defend him but business men, a minister, one official and the miners condemn him as a low brute.

Violence and the action of the deputized gunmen caused the union leaders to join with professional and business men to send in the National Guard, under the impression that the State would be "impartial". With their entry under the banner of "preserving the peace" and "impartiality", local officials of the U. M. W. of A. thought that now they would be freed from the oppression of officers and operators, would be able to organize, and would not have to combat the importation of scabs. This, despite the innumerable times in the past that the militia have acted as strike-breakers.

Impartiality in the struggle between the workers and the bosses is obvious-

ly futile. Although the soldiers have been condemned by both sides, now the condemnation comes only from the miners. Under the protection of the soldiers, wholesale arrests of union leaders have been made. Five thousand men have been forced back to work, hungry, depressed—but quietly sullen. The deputies continue brazenly forth; scabs are imported, the operators paying their transportation; miners demonstrations are broken up with tear gas bombs, and the strike is practically broken. But the trouble is not over!

## "Get Out of Harlan County"

Operators displayed their attitude when I entered the office of their association as a representative of the Fellowship of Reconciliation and asked them to consider the formation of a conciliatory board of representative operators, miners and others agreeable to both factions, to investigate the whole situation and to come to an agreement based on justice, not on oppression or compromise. One operator said, "This man should be held and investigated at once." The secretary of the Operators Association said, "You have been misinformed. There is no trouble here. . . . The best thing you can do is to get out of Harlan County." At another time, a mine superintendent said, "You can't reconcile with rattlesnakes! Miners are like niggers; they must be told what to do and what not to do. If unions come into this field we will close down." One operator who fired 35 of his 70 men said that he had no trouble; that he only hired and fired as he pleased which is in accord with "impartial" State law.

Judge D. C. Jones, millionaire, handsome churchman, with vast mining interests, elected by the power of the operators, selected a grand jury to "investigate" the lawlessness in Harlan County. One official states that the grand jury was selected to do just what it did—bring indictments against the leaders of the miners. Evidence against the deputies was disregarded by the jurors. Judge Jones was eloquent and insistent as he urged that indictments for murder be brought against 29 men; for "banding

and confederating" against 30; and for "criminal syndicalism" against five.

Judge Jones speaks in terms of "we" when referring to the operators. He freely denounces "outsiders", although he fails to say anything about the Chicago gunmen on the sheriff's force. His condemnation of the American Civil Liberties Union was emphasized with "damns". He joins with the operators in saying to all those trying to help the miners, "The best thing you can do is to get out of Harlan County."

Because they have dared to protest against the brutality and criminality of the coal operators 20 leaders of the miners are held in jail on triple murder charges without bond, and exorbitant bonds have been placed on others to hold them in jail. Testimony against nearly all of these men is virtually worthless. But such men cannot be allowed among the workers, for only operators shall tell the miners what to think and do.

Although the first strikes here were called by United Mine Workers of America officials, and the miners were made promises of National support by their leaders, thus far not a particle of aid has come from the U. M. W. of A. Ever since 1910 the miners in this section have been contributing to the coffers of the U. M. W. of A. Turnblazer, the president of this district of the U. M. W. of A., is said to have been bought off by local operators, but the operators say that he is only an exploiter of the miners and has been sent here by northern operators to create trouble. Anyhow, before leaving Harlan, he paid off a large mortgage and purchased an expensive car. However, some miners continue to remain loyal to him and the U. M. W. of A. But then some miners actually believe that the President of the U. S. A. will come to their aid in their fight for justice.

### Legal Thugs Attack Conners

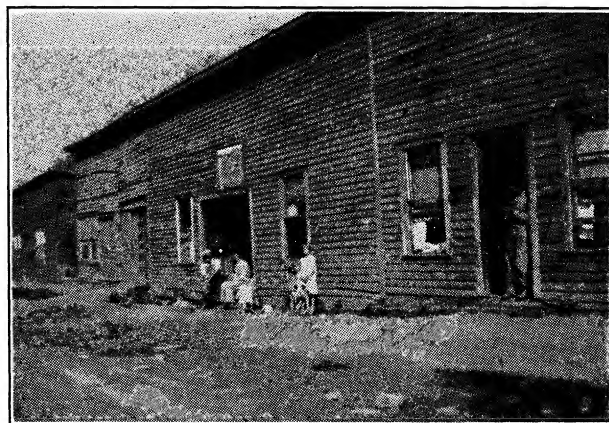
Defenders of these miners do not have an easy lot. Tom Conners of the General Defense Committee came here from Chicago a few weeks ago. After consulting with attorneys he was chased out of town and told never to come back again. But he came back and again consulted attorneys and defendants.

When sitting on the porch of a miner in Evarts on June 20, two deputies arrested him without a warrant. They turned him over to Sheriff Blair in Harlan at about 2 p. m. Blair snatched off Conners' glasses, crushed them under foot, and proceeded to

slug him, while two deputies stood by with guns. Conners attempted to defend himself and was then ordered to sit down by the gunmen. Whereupon Blair slugged him on the head, knocking him off the chair and severely cutting his scalp. Then the brute, Blair, placed a gun against Conners' head and said: "Now say your prayers."

Attorneys came to the Sheriff's office at 2:30 and remained for three hours trying to see Conners. They were told that he was not in Blair's office. Deputies continued to watch over him until after dark, then took him out to the Virginia state line, threatening to kill him if he ever came back. Conners struggled 12 miles to Appalachia and had his wounds dressed by a doctor who signed an affidavit describing them. When I saw Conners on June 23, outside of

This barn in Evarts, Ky., houses six miners' families—28 persons.



Harlan County, he was still suffering from the beating by the legal thugs of Harlan County.

But broken heads, brutalities, starvation, injustices at the hands of officials, the failure of the U. M. W. of A., prison bars, nor the seemingly unbreakable power of the operators can defeat the determination of these miners. They are in revolt and the end is not yet. Some months ago the operators damned the U. M. W. of A. But now that the miners agree the operators are asking, "Why have you deserted the U. M. W. of A.?"

Determined that the miners of Harlan County shall not be betrayed and those in jail sent to the electric chair or to long prison terms, the General Defense Committee is providing the best available defense attorneys, and relief as well. The International Labor Defense provides relief and stands ready to bring in further counsel if necessary. The Socialist Party is making a nation wide appeal for relief. The American Civil Liberties Union has entered the defense in the

big cases, especially on the "banding and confederating" and "criminal syndicalism" cases, and is bringing damage suits against the sheriff and his gunmen for \$70,000 for their brutality and violation of the civil rights of Tom Conners.

Yet relief and defense funds are low. Hungry thousands have not had a square meal in months. The prosecution, in the name of the State, is attempting to make this case so expensive that witnesses cannot be had to testify for the defense, and framed evidence will go unchallenged.

But existing throughout an excessively hot summer in a jail built for 60 but packed with 135 is not going to cool the temper of these workers or calm their bitterness. The Blairs and the Jones may be all powerful today—but tomorrow is another day.

### Gunmen Shoot Noted Editor

Bruce Crawford, well known southern editor, who was shot recently when he went to Harlan to make an investigation writes:

"There is no law to speak of in the Harlan coalfield. The 'law' is itself the most lawless. Mine-owner tyranny and mine-guard thuggery have terrorized the town of Harlan, where labor leaders are held without bail, cars are being dynamited, and every stranger is hounded by bestial deputies.

"Local police officers admit helplessness. Citizens not on the side of mine owners are cowed with fear. Threat of worse terror adds to the tenseness of the situation. . . .

"About 30 additional gunmen were imported last week (Aug. 1) after the withdrawal of national guardsmen. . . .

"Meanwhile Governor Sampson belittles to Legionnaires . . . that they should 'not stack arms until the last red has been put out of the state.'"



# Liberalism in the S. P.

By JAMES ONEAL

As Viewed by a Socialist Party Spokesman

The following article by James Oneal and the one by Leonard Bright in last month's issue of *Labor Age* deal with important issues which are of interest to all who follow current developments in the labor movement. We publish the articles for that reason, although they deal with the Socialist Party primarily and we realize that every organization has some problems which are not of general concern and which are therefore best handled in that organization's own press. Our purpose is to stimulate thoughtful and vigorous discussions of the very important problem of labor political organization in the U. S. today. Some of our views on that matter are set forth in the Report on Political Organization printed elsewhere in this issue. We hope to carry the discussion further in subsequent numbers.—The Editors.

IN considering the article by Leonard Bright in the July number of *LABOR AGE* I wish to say that I never take these questions into other publications unless in answer to criticism, but as Bright has taken this course I am following him with some reluctance. At the outset I must express my disagreement with him when he asserts that there is no danger of a liberal ascendancy in the Socialist Party. I also agree with that section of Kennedy's review of Norman Thomas' book that is devoted to Thomas' attitude towards Marxism, although I think that Kennedy overlooks a certain merit which other sections have.

To begin with origins. The liberal trend may be traced as far back as the year 1921 when the Intercollegiate Socialist Society, weakened by the post-war terror, changed its name. With that change came a slow modification of its fundamental Socialist perspective. As the League for Industrial Democracy in the ensuing years it more and more attracted individuals of the liberal type, near Socialists, pacifists, vague "radicals" and others difficult to classify. Eventually the L. I. D. had a membership in marked contrast with the organization once identified with the name of Jack London and other outstanding Socialists. It became an organization representing many views. The Socialism which

once had been in the forefront was shifted to the rear. It was not abandoned but it occupied a minor place in the L. I. D.

In the past five or six years the L. I. D. has served as a corridor through which quite a number of people passed into the Socialist Party. Had they passed through the old corridor of the days of Jack London they would have been better adapted to a working class movement, but with the watered Socialism and liberal trend of the L. I. D. those who passed through it into the party lacked much knowledge of the working class basis of the Socialist movement. From this and other sources came men and women who, although fundamentally sincere, were difficult to assimilate.

In the Socialist Party the liberal complex appeared in the old *Daily Call* in 1923. The writer as a member of the editorial staff observed it as it evolved. *The Call* could not live long as the period was the beginning of pessimism and defeatism in the whole labor movement. Funds were obtained from certain liberals to maintain it which in turn fostered the idea that its policy should be more pleasing to the liberals. I opposed this view, believing that *The Call* should go down with its colors flying rather than go down flying a liberal banner. A few friends said that I was "dogmatic," which was simply their way of saying that I was not a liberal.

## The Liberal Trend

Near the end the trade unions were called in and the plan for the *Daily Leader* was the result. That plan at least had the merit of making the new paper a fighting labor organ, but the institution was loaded up with liberals, with a liberal at its head who had no experience in the working class movement. The writer did not "belong" and was discharged, Comrade Thomas succeeding me as editorial writer. The less said about the character of the paper as Blankenhorn, the liberal chief shaped it, the better. I had worked for years for a modest salary but with the new publication salaries were

boosted. I have a copy of the last issue before me as I write. It had a fund of about \$100,000 which carried *The Call* from August 13 to October 1 and *The Leader* from the latter date to November 12, almost three months! The publication was a wreck and *The Leader* went down with a liberal-labor banner at its masthead.

Within a few months we established *The New Leader* which took up a Socialist policy although pessimism continued and even increased. Every phase of the labor movement declined in membership and morale. The young people revealed this mood. It was impossible to get many to attend serious studies in the Rand School. They wanted drama, literature, psychoanalysis and sex themes. They were living in the fool's paradise of capitalist "prosperity." Gloom settled over many party members. They forgot and the liberals did not anticipate that capitalism would collapse of its own contradictions. Only the "dogmatic" Marxists kept this in mind. Eventually the gloom took a peculiar turn in the publicity sent out by a party agency to the dailies and *The New Leader*. It was a liberal trend!

It is needless to say that this publicity did not come from the "dogmatic" Marxists. It came from new elements, some of them having passed through the L. I. D. corridor. The new propaganda was more or less moralistic, especially in relation to Tammany corruption. Much attention was paid to the bourgeois "progressives" like Senator Norris and his kind. The "quality" of this progressivism was criticised, the assumption being that if it reached a certain grade it would be satisfactory to Socialists. The theory back of this shift is that, as the working class would not listen to us we should appeal to liberals and progressives! Admission of this was made to the writer on two occasions by one connected with this publicity. But the admission wasn't necessary. Files of *The New Leader* for the past five or six years carry evidence of it.

The economic collapse expected by the "dogmatic" Marxists came in Oc-

tober, 1929, but the liberal complex had become so fixed that it continued. At the same time the liberals were quick with criticism of the British Labor Party on the ground that it had failed to live up to its labor objective. The criticism was justified but it comes with poor grace from those who, in this country, were following the liberal course followed by the Labor Party. If we had a parliamentary system similar to that of England and were temporarily in power our liberal trend would have produced no better results.

A recent example of the trend is a publicity story in *The New Leader* which has not disturbed Bright. Heirs of William Waldorf Astor got away with ten million dollars that should have passed into the Federal Treasury as an inheritance tax. Thomas and Blanchard cabled Lady Astor and wrote to John W. Davis, the Astor lawyer, pleading that the money be contributed to the relief of New York City's jobless. Lady Astor is told that "by every canon of moral decency" the money "should be given to assuage the suffering of the poor." One could not conceive of Debs with his working class views making this appeal. The idea is that of Christian charity stressed by Pope Pius in his recent Encyclical!

I want to be frank. One must concede the fullest sincerity to Norman Thomas as well as his energy, earnestness, and his services in aiding workers in strikes, but when Bright provides a special niche for Thomas and labels it "pragmatism" I must dissent. When he also singles out Louis Waldman, although not naming him, as the leading representative of the liberal trend he displays that timidity which he ascribes to myself and others. The fact is that every party member knows that Thomas and Waldman have intimately cooperated in publicity work. There may be a few minor differences but both fundamentally belong to the same group. Waldman is also a devoted worker but he was so gloomy some years ago that he urged reorganization of the party as an educational society.

Thomas is a contributing editor of *The Nation*, a liberal publication. The writer would never permit his name to be so listed in any liberal magazine. He could not reconcile it with his Socialist views. It is also of some significance that all the reviews of Thomas' recent book were practically uniform in regarding it as more progressive or liberal than Socialist. A few of the reviewers may be disregarded for various reasons and when this allowance is

made the statement remains true. Moreover, as editor I have in recent years received occasional letters from workmen complaining of the liberal trend, and in every instance I have urged them to consider it as a temporary phase of the movement which would eventually readjust itself. These letters justify the belief that some workmen have lost interest in the party because of this liberalism.

We may adopt excellent programs or poor ones, but what really shapes the character of a movement is its propaganda and publicity. This propaganda publicity is what members hear and read from week to week and whatever its character, its constant reiteration constitutes the real trend of the movement. If it is more or less moralistic and intended to reach so-called liberals the movement is certain to be shifted from its working class basis. That is to say, it will gradually cease to be a Socialist movement.

### Only Three Party Groupings

Now as to the party groupings. There are three, not four as Bright contends. One represents a working class view, the second a liberal trend, and the third consists of new elements, more or less correctly called "militants." There is no such thing as a pragmatist group. It is an artificial creation by Bright. The militants, because they are recent acquisitions, are not certain of their own minds. Many of them came to us through the L. I. D. corridor and they are tossed between doubt of the liberals and suspicion of the Marxists. To foster this suspicion Bright and others translate the division into the "young" and the "old," the latter being conceded some experience and knowledge but being unfortunate "old fogies."

Bright himself unwittingly presents the varied composition of the new recruits he is allied with as professionals and middle class persons. I might add that quite a number are students and a few assume an attitude of academic arrogance towards workmen and the older members. The psychology of these few appears to be rooted in the assumption that if one has some college culture it makes him of more importance than the worker who may never have passed beyond the public schools. However, among these new elements are splendid members who, I am glad to say, do not display this arrogance.

Here it may be said that the Socialist is not in the least impressed with

college culture. Educational institutions are more servile to the capitalist class in this country than in any other nation and the tendency is for students to load up with a cargo of bourgeois complexes. A student may resist bourgeois academic coercion and honestly think that he has conquered it and yet emerge with an odd mixture of pacifist and liberal ideas that range him against capitalism and yet not be a Socialist.

There is a trend in the party towards this liberalism and away from the working class because some members have no faith in the working class. A Socialist movement with a labor perspective may commit errors within that perspective and still retain its morale, its fighting spirit, and its Socialist aims, but if it shifts from this class perspective it is a fundamental mistake from which will come many other mistakes. With a stratum of liberalism in the movement there is danger that the growing reaction to it may emerge in a genuine Marxist dogmatism which would be as sterile as the other trend, and we who stand for a working class party are as anxious to avoid the one as the other. We are not "dogmatic" as Bright contends; if we were we would not have been as tolerant and patient as we have been for years.

Let us return to Bright's attempt to answer Kennedy's criticism of the liberal tendency. We have no objections to professionals, students, and even middle class elements joining the party providing that the party has maintained its fundamental labor basis and new members know that the party primarily represents the interests of the working class. In this case we guard against moralistic and liberal appeals in our propaganda and have a normal Socialist movement that can assimilate new elements.

In his distress Bright turns to the Communist Manifesto and quotes it in his favor but the section quoted takes for granted the development of a normal Socialist movement such as I have described. What we now have is an abnormal and unwelcome trend and we are unable to assimilate new members from non-wage working occupations. If the trend continues the danger is a complete shifting of the movement from its working class perspective. Because of the present tendency the party now displays more numerous and chaotic views on practically every important question than ever before in its history. This is the logical result of the propaganda and publicity mentioned above. Bright would cooperate with this trend rather than boldly face it and help to change it. He creates a mythi-

cal "pragmatism" and frankly states that he would rather be in the wrong with it than in the right with anything else.

I do not exaggerate. He states that he would rather be wrong with Thomas than right with Hillquit on any issue and asserts that this view is shared by the militant group. Here he exaggerates for I know of militants who will revolt against this sentiment. Bright's plain meaning is that the welfare of the movement is not what determines his attitude. Principles do not matter. He will follow one member whether he is right or wrong. He has given his whole case away but I am sure that Thomas will not accept this point of view.

### The "Old Fogies"

Another amazing view is ascribed by Bright to the militants which I know most of them will repudiate. This is the statement that "When an old fogy begins talking about 25 or 30 years ago, groans are heard, especially from young people." This is true of a few and it verifies my assertion of an academic arrogance displayed by them against those who gave many years of their life to the movement. It is an expression of that "college culture" mentioned above. Two decades ago some new members entered the German movement and displayed the same arrogance against Bebel, the elder Liebknecht, Singer, Menger and others but the movement was less tolerant with this attitude than our party is. It was ridiculed into oblivion.

One of my richest experiences as a

youngster was to meet "old fogies" whose work extended over many decades. I enjoyed the reminiscences of Julius Valteich, once private Secretary to Ferdinand Lassalle, of Robert Bandlow and his experiences in the early days in Cleveland, of Alexander Jonas the veteran of the *Volkszeitung*, and of Ben Hanford who hobbled on crutches the last years of his life.

The writer also spent a generation with the old "fogy" whose life was burnt out in prison and whose light went out in Lindlahr Sanatorium. It is probably unfortunate that this veteran of the class struggle, Eugene V. Debs, did not live into the period of cultured arrogance against "old fogies." He would have been taught his place by Bright and a few who share his view. There is still an opportunity for Bright to visit his brother, Theodore, broken in health in Terre Haute, partly due to semi-starvation thirty odd years ago when as secretary of the party he repeatedly pawned his watch to pay the rent of the headquarters while he and his wife and daughter lived on short rations. When the writer was last in Terre Haute this "old fogy" talked about "25 or 30 years ago" but I did not have that peculiar "culture" that would induce Bright to groan in derision.

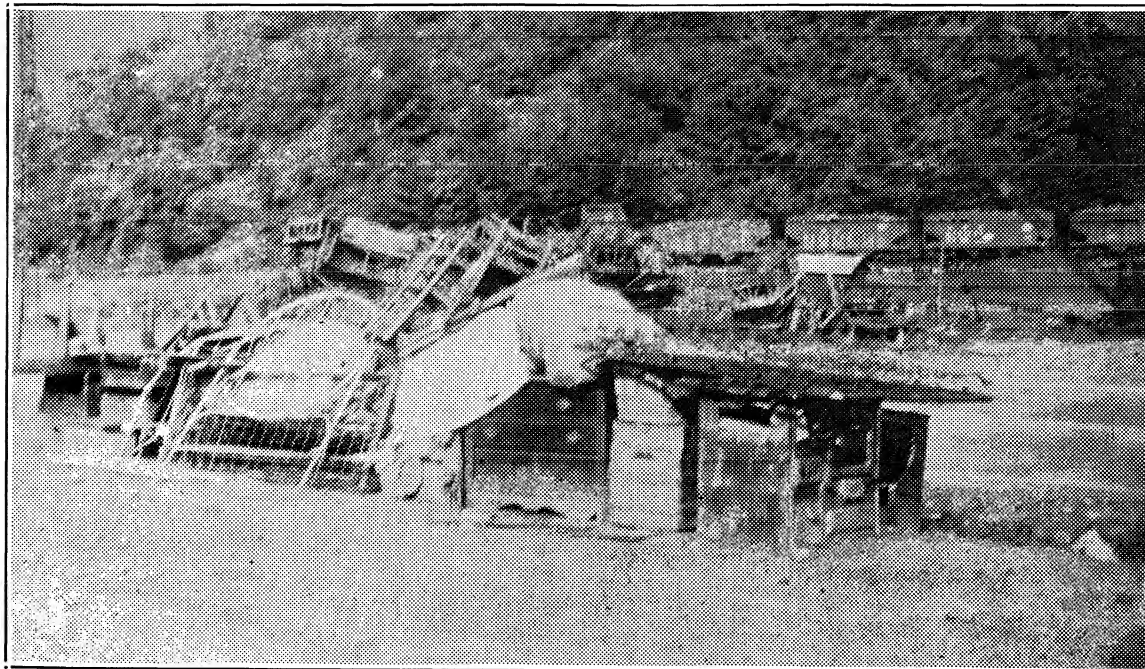
We understand this point of view. It assumes that what occurred in past decades is of no consequence. It assumes that interest in the history of the movement cannot go with work of the present hour. The Socialist movement began not in the sixties and seventies but when Bright and some others entered it. Nothing else matters. Who

would read the reminiscences of August Bebel, Wilhelm Liebknecht, Belfort Bax, the Russian revolutionists? Not they. Like Charles Dickens' eminent Podsnap, the "old fogies" are waved aside. And this in a movement organized for the emancipation of the working class!

Bright says that the new members "want action." So do the "dogmatic" Marxists but, with the exception of two or three, we have been unable to get new members to go to the masses in field work. Beginning early this year the party has sent out appeal after appeal for volunteers to do this work which "dogmatic" Marxists did for many years. The writer told the story of that work in an article in *The New Leader*, hoping it would inspire new members who "want action" to engage in this work. No response. It is easy to sit around in New York and say that you "want action" and then not act. It recalls Dickens' witticism of the signpost which points out the right road but never goes there itself.

I have considered only a few phases of party trends as space will not permit consideration of all. I only want to observe that when Marxism was in the ascendant in the movement the latter did not exhibit the chaos of ideas it now displays. That is sufficient comment upon the character of our leading propaganda and publicity for a number of years. Moreover it was not timidity that restrained us from forceful opposition. It was an excess of tolerance which of itself shows that our Marxism is not of the "dogmatic" type. Had we been dogmatists the cur-

(Continued on Page 29)



An eviction. This is the answer of the bosses to the workers' protest against starvation

# The Battle of White Plains

By BENJAMIN MANDEL

**J**UST one hundred and fifty-five years after the first historic battle of White Plains, the peaceful hills of Westchester County again echoed to the roar of warfare. At that time it was a battle against the minions of King George, who sought to impose his tyrannical yoke upon the American colonists. Today it is the struggle of one thousand highway laborers for a living wage against the overlords of 1931, the highway contractors.

Westchester County, of which White Plains is the county seat, is characterized by certain distinct features. It is the wealthiest residential county in the United States, including within its confines such representatives of American plutocracy as John D. Rockefeller, Frank A. Vanderlip, Samuel Untermyer and many other scions of Wall Street. Certainly its total tax resources from the wealthy owners of the estates in the county, are sufficient to provide amply for a decent wage for those doing public work for the county. And yet Westchester County apparently could not afford to pay a living wage to highway laborers doing the most arduous kind of work in the boiling sun for 10, 11 and 12 hours a day.

The key to Westchester County politics, the hub around which the local business and government turns, is the mad scramble for profits on contracts for road building. Westchester County is the gateway to New York City. The question of providing adequate roads is therefore of paramount importance for the county. It seems that in recent months a number of outside contractors had submitted inordinately low bids for contract work in competition with local contractors. This was popularly known as "chiseling". They made these low bids in the expectation that they would lower labor costs through a series of drastic wage cuts bringing wages down from 75 cents to 40 cents, with the promise of further reductions to 35 and 30 cents. The contractors expected little resistance from the laborers who were completely unorganized and consisted chiefly of Spaniards, Portuguese, Italian and Negro workers, who the contractors thought could be easily terrorized and browbeaten. The expectations of the contractors were

given a terrific shock by the strike of the construction laborers, which has shaken the entire county for the past two weeks.

The strike started on the job of the Peckham Road Corporation and has spread throughout White Plains to Mt. Kisco, Valhalla, Greenburgh, Chappaqua, Bedford Hills and other suburbs of White Plains, tying up millions of dollars worth of contracts. The strikers, with very few exceptions, spoke no English, and lacked the most elementary knowledge of organization and the slippery methods of the employers and their agents.

## Errors Made

From the outset, before the Conference for Progressive Labor Action was called in, a number of very costly errors were made. Officers were elected in a careless manner and therefore included an insufficient number of fighting, stable elements, and Cuevez, secretary, who later sold out the strike. Meetings were conducted chiefly in Spanish, thus preventing the Negro workers, Italians and Portuguese from participating effectively. Votes were taken in a most haphazard manner, any speaker having the right to put the most important question to a snap vote by asking in Spanish for the decisive "Si" (Yes) without pro and con discussion. Everybody was freely admitted to meetings with the right to speak and vote, whether a laborer or not, until we instituted a regular application blank for admission. Meetings were mostly agitational and inspirational and lacked effective, practical organizational character, until some time later, when we instituted a system of organizational reports and a definite picket machinery. There was no real functioning executive committee, strike committee or other sub-committee. Decisions were made and unmade by one or more individuals in a very loose way, oftentimes directly contrary to the expressed will of the "assembly" or general membership meeting. Members were "signed up" simply by entering their names in a book, until we established a dues system. The workers, unable to read the English press, could not follow and guide themselves by the press reactions reported daily. They were bliss-

fully reliant upon the righteousness of their cause, and the good-will of public officials, lawyers, etc., not realizing that might and mass power is right in a class society. This will serve to characterize the type of workers we were seeking to weld into a clear-headed, disciplined, fighting union.

The strategy of the contractors from the outset was to invoke a reign of police terror to intimidate the strikers and thus break the strike. Arrests were made by the wholesale on no charges whatever. In one case an entire mass meeting was arrested. Prisoners were denied the right of counsel. The federal immigration authorities were called in and a number of the strikers have already been deported. Machine guns and tear gas bombs were introduced in order to overawe the strikers. The right of peaceful picketing was openly and flagrantly violated with the aid of police clubs, which were used ruthlessly, while police cars transported scabs to the jobs for the contractors. The wretched boarding houses of the strikers were raided at night without warrants, ostensibly in campaign for the righteous purpose of eliminating the "flop houses," as the men's boarding houses were called.

This campaign of frightfulness reached its highest point with the shooting of Arthur Rose, a striker, and the beating up of Alvaro Gil in the police station, both acts being committed by Police Officer McCue and later commended by Mayor McLaughlin, Chief of Police Miller and Commissioner of Safety Gennerich. The policy employed was well expressed by one police officer who declared confidentially, "If we kill a few of them, the rest will leave town."

## Terror Broken

We broke down this reign of terror in an effective manner. The American Civil Liberties Union immediately began to burn up the telegraph wires with protests to the immigration authorities. Lawyers were sent in to White Plains to defend the civil rights of the strikers, Messrs. Murray Fuerst and Samuel Cohen, displaying the utmost courage and self-sacrifice in the struggle against the high-handed methods of the White Plains police depart-



ment. Charges were pressed against Officer McCue, whose cold-blooded act did much to swing public sentiment in favor of the strikers and protests were made against the beating up of Gil, the shooting of Rose and the strong-arm tactics of the Chief of Police. Finally we brought charges against the Republican Chief of Police Miller before the Democratic governor of the State, Roosevelt, demanding the former's removal. These tactics broke the back of the terror and the contractors had to resort to another subterfuge. The time-worn bomb scare was brought into play. Only one local paper had the audacity to circulate this story with a two-inch headline reading, "Lay Explosion to Strike Bomb," reported by Charles D. Story, vice president and William H. Peckham, president of the Peckham Road Corporation, the most vicious of the "chiselers." Two residents not named, were said to have been thrown from their chairs by the shock, while another distinctly smelled gunpowder. The story ended as follows: "No trace of a bomb has been found and no reports of damaged machinery have been turned in to the police." The story was hailed by the assembled strikers with gales of laughter, and was howled down with such ridicule that it never showed its head again.

### "All We Ask Is A Living Wage"

In the face of this campaign of terror, the newly-organized Construction Laborers Union of Westchester County came forward with the slogan "All We Ask Is A Living Wage," which we carried on placards to the picket lines everywhere. We demonstrated that we were doing our best to convince the workers and the city at large, that the demand for \$5.00 a day for an eight hour day was fully justified. The result of these tactics was that public sentiment was solidly with the strikers.

Picketing was carried on with the help of automobiles owned by the men, which carried the squads of pickets to each job. A legitimate criticism of the conduct of the strike is undoubtedly the fact there was insufficient mass picketing. The arrests and deportations weakened the more timid elements, who did not appear on the picket line. Scabs were brought from out-of-town by the contractors at great expense, but fortunately for the strikers, they were utterly inefficient and insufficient to carry on the work, and we depleted their number and spirit to

a large extent by our picketing. Furthermore the bringing in of labor from out of town was looked upon with disfavor by the business people of the town who were dependent upon the inhabitants for patronage and trade. Contrary to the practice in other industries, on strike, highway construction, because of its nature, could not be sent elsewhere for completion, which was another advantage to the strikers. In spite of the shortcomings of the picketing, construction work was effectively crippled in and around White Plains, with more and more outside towns ready to go, as the strike progressed.

Finding ourselves considerably handicapped by the fact that we had no

### O'Connor's Moves

On Tuesday, July 21, Mr. O'Connor called the union committee to his office and presented to the committee a plan for an arbitration board, all cut and dried, which plan he had worked out without consulting the union, but on the contrary with the cooperation of Mr. Peter A. Doyle, of the State Department of Labor, and elements representing certain contractors. The arbitration board was to consist of seven members as follows: Mr. O'Connor with full power to represent the union; Mr. Jay Downer, county engineer, who had consistently attacked the strike; a Mr. McGrath, member of the Common Council, in close touch with the contractors; one



Striking Construction Laborers of White Plains

local counsel with an intimate knowledge of local conditions, which is vitally necessary in a strike, we received the recommendation of the name of Thomas J. O'Connor. Mr. O'Connor assured our committee that he was a fighting Irishman, whose sympathies were thoroughly with the strikers. For a time he apparently worked devotedly to help break the police terror and assist those arrested. The Conference for Progressive Labor Action representatives early saw that the correct strategy was to secure a quick settlement of the strike with such gains as could be won, and not to prolong the strike because of the very evident weaknesses of the union, the disadvantages faced by a group of foreign born workers in such a struggle, and finally because of the economic depression. The union committee instructed Mr. O'Connor to proceed with negotiations looking toward an early settlement.

contractor; two clergymen; and Mr. Walter H. Gilpatric, president of the Chamber of Commerce. The decisions of this board were to be "final and binding." This proposition was presented to the membership meeting of the union that night and was unanimously rejected. For his treacherous part in this attempt to sell out the strike, Mr. O'Connor's legal connection with the union was severed and he was roundly condemned for swindling the union of \$200.

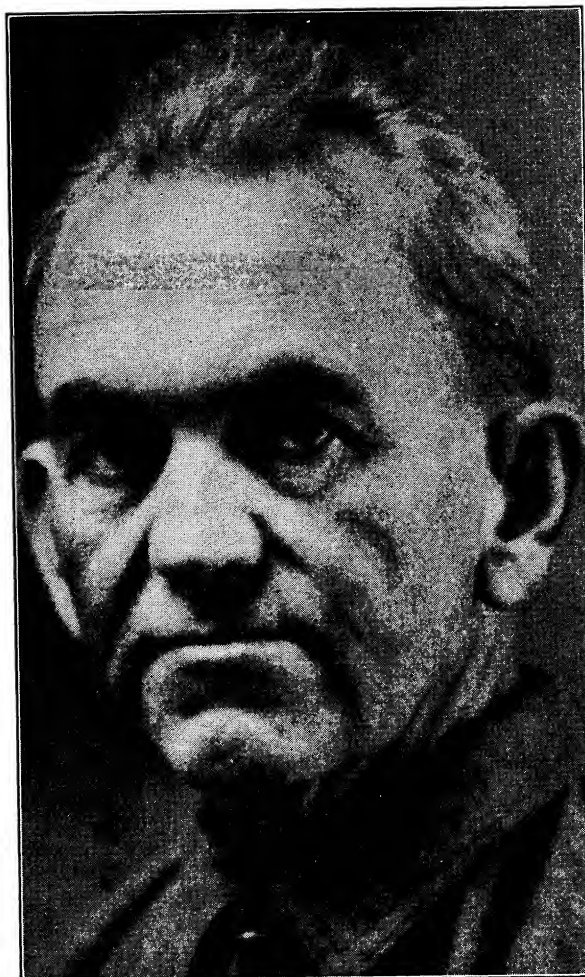
But as O'Connor frequently remarked in his oily way, "There's more than one way of killing a pig"—and also a strike. Mr. O'Connor now proceeded to negotiate individually with members of the leading committee of the union, flattering some and terrorizing others, who were out on bail under serious charges. So persistently and successfully did he work on these individuals that on the day following the mass meeting, they issued a state-

ment in support of O'Connor and his plan. A hue and cry arose in the local press "Get Rid of Mandel." The atmosphere was poisoned with countless rumors against the C.P.L.A. representative, and yet the strikers stood firm against O'Connor and the arbitration board.

When O'Connor's plan was rejected we decided to propose immediate negotiations with the contractors on the basis of a committee of three representing the contractors and three representing the union. This plan the Contractors Association representing 25 leading contractors, was finally compelled to accept. The union's demands were: \$5.00 for an 8-hour day, recognition of the union, removal of scabs and employment of strikers, weekly payment of wages, time and a half for overtime. The contractors at this conference proposed the following terms: 50 cents an hour minimum. (This meant a restoration of the old rate); overtime after eight hours to be voluntary (practically a recognition of the principle of the 8-hour day); the contractors to issue a public statement containing their terms and pledging to bring pressure to bear upon any contractor who undercut the scale; tolerance of the union; removal of all scabs and the rehiring of all strikers. Anyone with the faintest knowledge of unionism and present conditions will recognize that all in all these previously unorganized foreign laborers had won a definite victory over the powerful contractors on the basis of these terms. Of course we tried to press the contractors up to 55 cents an hour, to a year's pledge and the promise that all new contracts would be made on the basis of \$5.00 for an 8-hour day. But they stood pat on the above terms, which the strikers should have accepted under protest.

### Arrested

This was not done. The strikers simply could not and would not understand the necessity of a quick settlement on the basis of certain gains with the opportunity of consolidating and enlarging their union. They refused to grasp the necessary understanding of the various objective forces at work and, while sluggish in doing picket duty, obstinately adhered to the demand for \$5.00 a day for an 8-hour day, disregarding the practical consideration that the largest contractors had signed estimates, which would make them fight with the most desperate methods against terms which they considered impossible to meet. Early



## He's Still in San Quentin

Shall They Con-  
tinue to Keep  
Him There?

in the strike, the strikers had turned down an offer of \$5.00 for a 9-hour day, which was also a mistake.

Meanwhile the police department sent out a special automobile squad on Saturday morning, obviously with the purpose of "getting Mandel," and they did. I was arrested on the preposterous charge of pushing a 250-pound armed officer and held in jail until after the afternoon meeting. At this meeting, under the direction of Cuevez, who was O'Connor's tool, the strikers decided to accept the arbitration proposal and thus leave themselves entirely in O'Connor's hands. I was later ruled out of the strike to the joy of the local press. The outcome of this move is obvious. The decision of the arbitration board will undoubtedly be the complete withdrawal of even those meager concessions which the men had already won.

It is necessary to comment briefly on the role of the A. F. of L. and of the Communists. In spite of the fact that the highway laborers were in the front lines of struggle to defend the wage scales of the entire county, the

A. F. of L. of Westchester County gave not a particle of practical support, and limited itself to vague generalities and promises, conditional upon affiliation with Yonkers Local 60, which is under the most corrupt and incompetent leadership. The strikers demanded an autonomous local, which was refused. Efforts may be made to bribe the local leadership with certain offers in order to get them to join the A. F. of L. finally.

The Communists several times and in various ways tried to inject themselves into the strike. Our policy was to inject no extraneous issues, to make it a clear fight for a living wage. The contractors tried repeatedly and unsuccessfully to inject the Communist issue, but they were unsuccessful until the Trade Union Unity League issued a public statement denouncing me as a "renegade Communist." This was luridly played up by the press, the day before my arrest. They also tried to capture a meeting by the new storm tactics of rushing the chair, but were thrown out for their pains. In spite of

# Anarchy in the Dressmakers Industry

By ROSA PESOTTA

THE dress maker's industry, once fairly prosperous and about 75 per cent under union control, is today a shadow of its former self. Cut-throat competition among contractors; piracy and irresponsibility of jobbers; demoralization in the ranks of the garment workers, and the influx of workers from other industries, due to unemployment, have caused the average dressmaker to find herself on the verge of starvation.

The dress industry came into its own around 1919. Until then Waistmakers and the Cloak and Suit Makers were the militant vanguard in the Ladies' Garment industries. With the advent of dresses, suits and blouses, skirts and shirtwaists were replaced with medium-priced dresses, and most of the waistmakers became dressmakers. The industry prospered, and by 1923 the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union had the situation well under control, organizing the industry during the General Strike, being the first to introduce the 40 hour week into dress manufacturing.

The Defunct Waistmakers' Union, Local 25, was subsequently dissolved, and a new local organized, merging the existing Cloth Dressmakers' Local 23 with Local 25 into one Dressmakers' Union, Local 22. All other crafts were distributed among the existing craft locals of the Cloak, Dress, Suit and Reefer Makers' Union of the I. L. G. W. U.

This combination worked disastrously upon the workers of the dress industry. Hitherto some sort of control had been practiced. A worker had to bring a working card from the organization when applying for a job. And some organization drives were carried on during the season, organizing newly established dress shops. (Some shops stay in business only one season and then give up, invariably taking along with them the last payroll of the employees.) With the merging of all ladies' garment workers into one large organization, control gradually slipped out, due to certain unavoidable circumstances.

Dressmakers found themselves confronted with problems such as this: Cloak season is over around April. The fall season begins on or about June 30, so a cloakmaker has a chance to *catch in* a few weeks on dresses. Being a transitional worker, he does not exert his energy to improve con-

ditions or better the price; he simply works long hours and rushes a little—to make up his wages. After the season he is back on his job at cloaks, where the week-work system insures him of a weekly wage.

Similar transitional workers from other industries — men's clothing, boys' wash suits, white goods, millinery, neckwear, waterproof garments, and housewives in need of pin money or wanting a piece of furniture, invade the dress industry during the seasons. Being only beginners in the trade they actually work for half of the price.

The organization, in the meantime, did not keep pace with the growth of this highly seasonal free-for-all industry. Petty politics, political issues, scramble for office jobs, were always the major activities. Hence the industry actually slipped out of union control.

When in 1926 factional disputes ended with the expulsion from the International of a few of the most influential militant active locals, Dressmakers' Local 22 was one of them.

Composed mostly of women (Cloakmakers retained their local membership while working in Dress shops) the union, drained of its vitality, was left on the rocks.

The expelled left wing faction subsequently organized an Industrial Union, affiliated with R. T. U. L. The right wing, Local 22, still existed. Both, however, lost their influence and control over the vast membership. The new crop of dressmakers was left to the trade at large—the organization alienated itself from its membership.

During that period a new element began to enter the dress trade: Porto-Rican, Mexican, Spanish, Latin American, Negro, Syrian, American young boys and girls direct from public schools—all these entered the dress industry during the factional strife. They were educated in the light seen by either faction, seeking to convert them. Accusations of racketeering, of

graft, gangsterism, insincerity, politics—such was the literature baptizing these newcomers. Small wonder that they refused to join any faction and clung to the employer.

For nearly five years this method of propaganda was vigorously carried on by the union's left wing mostly. When the Communist Party split into factions (1929) due to certain tactics pursued by the Third International, the Industrial Union found itself also divided into factions. Some of the insurgents were eventually either expelled from the party and automatically also from the union, or were simply forced to leave the organization. Such workers could no longer remain in shops controlled by the Industrial Union and drifted back in large numbers into the folds of the old Dressmakers' Union, Local 22.

Within the original Local 22, affiliated with the International, two distinct groups again evolved, one composed of progressive members who stood by the organization during the expulsion policy of the lefts, helping to avoid political strife within the organization; and another of those who were indifferent to any activities of the rank and file, to whom an organization is another means of income and certain small benefits.

These two groups, working in seeming harmony during the period of factional strife, found themselves at opposite poles in their own tactics. One, progressive, demanded organizational activities; the other, retrogressive and passive, turned a deaf ear to these demands. The result was that these two distinct groups found fertile soil within the Dressmakers' Union.

A Club was formed, whose aims and methods are to maintain control of a few large factories and a small dues-paying membership; using the influence of the employer and inducing him to enter into an agreement with the organization for his own benefit, forcing the employer into the union.

And the Circle was formed whose aims and methods are to reawaken the militancy in the dormant and defenceless dressmakers; to induce them to join the ranks of organized labor; to solidify the various warring factions into one organization, and to force the

(Continued on page 29)

# Marxism, Stalinism, and Piece-Work

By JOHN C. KENNEDY

**W**HEN Joseph Stalin announced recently that piece-work was to be widely introduced in Soviet industries and that different wage-levels were to be maintained in order to stimulate industrial efficiency a flood of comments appeared interpreting the "new economic policy." Some of the organs of unorthodox communist groups joined with capitalist journals in asserting that here was proof positive that Stalin was straying away from the path of Marxism. Other editors were content to make the rather stale comment "that the Five-Year Plan is breaking down and Stalin is resorting to capitalist methods in order to save the situation."

To any one at all familiar with industrial developments in the U.S.S.R. in recent years Stalin's announcement does not come as any great surprise. Piece work has been in vogue in many of the factories for some time and there never has been a uniform level of wages. The new development is primarily one of emphasis. Hitherto great efforts have been made through socialist competition, party and trade union discipline, and Idealistic appeals to raise the productivity of industry. The astonishing progress made on the Five-Year Plan proves that these methods have achieved results. But they have not been effective with all the workers, particularly the more backward elements and those who are just now being drawn into industry.

It must be remembered that the psychology of most of the peasants is still individualistic. They are being drawn into industry at the rate of two million a year, and they are being organized into collective and state farm groups in still larger numbers. If their best efforts are to be obtained at this time they must see some direct connection between what they do individually and what they get. Hence the more general establishment of piece-work.

But, says the critic, doesn't this mean an abandonment of Marxism? Doesn't it mean a return to individualism? Not at all. It simply means that the Russian communists are facing the realities of the situation in their efforts to build socialism. The fact that Marx and Lenin stressed the necessity for a dictatorship of the proletariat in passing from capitalism to socialism indicates that they recognized that an

appeal to social and idealistic motives alone would not suffice in the early days of transition. Class-conscious and idealistic workers will give their best to the new society regardless of personal gain, but the more individualistic elements must be stimulated by individual rewards. We have an extreme example of this in the high salaries paid to bourgeois specialists. On the other hand some of the reactionary and counter-revolutionary elements have been whipped into line by force.

Some of the critics, to be sure, concede that special measures must be resorted to in order to get production during the transition period, but they fear that this emphasis on individualism will increase, and eventually destroy the very spirit of socialism. Precisely the same objections were raised at the time when Lenin introduced his "new economic policy" and with much greater justification. It was indeed a serious matter that the profit system should be reestablished in certain lines of trade and industry, and that capitalists should be given a new lease on life. However, events proved that Lenin was right. Goods that were sorely needed were brought into the market and the Soviet Government was able within a few years to make

state industry and trade so powerful that the private capitalists (nepmen) ceased to be a menace. Stalin may with equal assurance predict that as the Soviet educational system does its work and the modes of living become more thoroughly socialized there will be less and less need to appeal to individualistic motives in order to make industry function effectively.

There probably will be much experimentation during the next few years in the Soviet Union in attempting to find the most satisfactory system of distributing the fruits of industry. There likewise will be experimentation in the management and control of industry. It would be childish every time a change is made in these matters to exclaim that "Russia is returning to capitalism." Russia is not going to return to capitalism any more than western Europe is going to return to feudalism. It is time for the world to recognize that an entirely new cycle of social development has been entered upon in the U.S.S.R. and that changes in administration or policy do not indicate a return to the old, but simply another step in the building of the new. To be sure not every step will be wise or even in a forward direction, but the old capitalistic world is gone forever.

## HEART TO HEART TALK No. 1

The last two issues of Labor Age have aroused a wave of discussion and interest in labor circles throughout the country. And to whisper a little secret, there's more and hotter stuff coming. As a result our office has been flooded with inquiries, as to what the stir is all about.

The fact is that the realization is slowly but surely sinking in, that Labor Age has a message, distinctly and peculiarly different from any labor publication in the United States.

Labor Age bristles with conflict, with the rattle and roar of the class struggle. Yet withal it is sober and careful in its tone and in its presentation of the facts.

Labor Age is thoroughly American in its approach to labor problems, because it is based upon the principle that the class struggle in the United States and the destruction of American capitalism will be accomplished by American workers themselves in their own peculiar way, suited to the conditions prevailing in this country.

Many of us have been waiting for just such a paper for a long time—and here it is, pulsing with life and struggle. If Labor Age is to grow in influence and strength, it will be through your help and thousands like you. If you liked this issue of Labor Age why not pass it along to your friends and fellow-workers and then pop the question: "WHY NOT SUBSCRIBE?"

Every Labor Age subscriber means another intelligent, progressive and militant co-worker in your shop, union or city. Be a booster for Labor Age.

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# New Parties and Prospects in The British Labor Scene

By MARK STARR

**I**N the first weeks of October and September the Trades Union Congress and the Labor Party respectively will make their annual stocktaking and discuss future policy. American radicals, who became the victims of "wishful thinking" when the Labor Government took office in 1929 and who thought big fundamental changes would be quickly made in the motherland of modern capitalism, now tend to the opposite extreme and think that little stands to the credit of Labor during the last three years. However, there is much in the record which can be examined profitably. Labor politicians are human, all too human, in Britain as elsewhere. Whatever the clarity of the Labor Party platform anent Socialism or of the theoretical aims of the candidates, they end up their election fights with the desire to win and to hold office. That entails putting the soft pedal on the more radical aims of the Party. So when nearly eight and a half million people lost their fear of the word Socialism and gave the Labor Government its majority, it did not mean that those elected felt they had a mandate to apply boldly the cure of Socialism to the malady of capitalism, aggravated by the post-war situation and more recently by the world-wide depression.

As far as one individual can judge from a first-hand survey of the mining and agricultural areas during the last ten months and from sitting in on various conferences, the feeling of organized Labor is that their position would have been much worse if the Tories had been in power; in conferences they will vote for more militancy, but not in such a way that enemies of Labor in the forthcoming elections will be provided with ammunition. This is not an heroic attitude and leads to apathy (as indicated by the decreased vote in most of the by-elections) but there does not seem to be any noticeable swing to the left. The Communist Party is largely absorbed in the struggle to keep its daily paper alive. In Maesteg, in the devastated coal-mining area of South Wales where the miners had just received yet another wage-cut and where, in the absence of any other anti-Labor candidates, every protest vote could be

safely given, the C. P. secured less than 5000 votes, about one-quarter of the total. Then too the Independent Labor Party which focuses the criticism against official Labor is suffering from reduced membership and from decreasing circulation for its weekly, the *New Leader*.

## Wage Cuts and Unemployment

Recent dispatches tell of still further attempted wage-cuts. The machinists will probably abandon national agreements to avoid wage reductions and fight guerilla fashion to take advantage of the patchy prospects of the industry, allowing their locals to take action in the expanding auto and electrical branches, without regard to the unorganized general sections of the trade. The miners are by law assured of the return to the seven-hour day but dare not take advantage of that position because of the consequent wage slashes announced by the owners and because of the longer workday retained by European competitors, although concerted international action to reduce the miners' workday has already successfully been begun through the International Labor Office. The wages of the transport and dock workers are also being attacked, altho Ernest Bevin, head of the Transport Workers Union, has promised resistance to any such demands. The postal workers alone are trying to make a counter offensive by claiming a weekly increase of \$2.50 and some share of job control. There can be no doubt that any action taken by the transport workers will receive general support from the other unions who have already suffered, and the Labor Government would be again in an awkward position.

Until the last sitting of the I.L.O., the Trades Union Congress was publicly complaining that the Labor Government like its predecessors had not ratified the Washington Convention for a legal 48-hour week. At that sitting the ratification was announced for the next session.

A more serious source of friction between the unions and the Govern-

ment was the proposed reduction of the unemployment benefit, e. g., from \$5.25 weekly to \$4.75 for an adult man and from \$4.75 to \$3.25 for a woman. The T.U.C. had protested against the terms of reference given to the investigating Commission. In view of the lack of provision for extra funds in the last Snowden budget and in the light of Mr. Snowden's declarations for the need of economy, the Commission rejected the T.U.C.'s case for a non-contributory scheme financed out of taxation. When the Commission came out for a reduction of total annual benefits by about \$120 millions, the T.U.C. immediately arranged a nation-wide series of protest meetings and the Government at once had to reject the main findings of the Commission which it had set up and to secure an extension of the borrowing powers of the unemployment fund. Instead of listening to aged Mr. Snowden lecturing the House of Commons on the need for economy, the House heard Tom Johnston officially declaring that the victims of "our rotten social order" would not be persecuted for their poverty and that Labor would go and get the money from the rich to save them.

The T.U.C. was also displeased at the complicated compromise, put up and later abandoned, to deal with the Scabs Charter which gives the courts the power to grant injunctions against the unions in case of a general strike. The T.U.C. simply wanted a return to the pre-1927 position because it does not admit any crime in the national strike of 1926 any more than the Germans accept "sole guilt" for the War. The Labor lawyer experts and the Liberals thought otherwise and time was wasted.

All these matters will be ventilated at the next Congress. If one can judge from decisions of the Annual Conference of the Trades Councils (i. e., C. L. U.), the active elements in the unions recognize that nationalization of the essential industries is the only cure for unemployment. Demands are also being made for economy in the payment of interest on war debt which despite falling prices still drains about \$5,000,000 daily from the public revenues.

## Mosley's "Flash"

Sir Oswald Mosley swept the last Labor Party Conference with an appeal for daring action. He was elected to the Executive. Bevin and other important trade union leaders supported his appeal. This year not even the name of the dangerous reactionary Winston Churchill will be so execrated. His impatience and ambition have caused him to overleap himself in an attempt to found a separate party which is not estimated to outlive the next election. His following at present is a personal one because all his one-time trade union colleagues have joined in the chorus of denunciation which swells all the louder because many had been previously silent out of party loyalty when MacDonald had elevated Mosley to high position over the heads of tried and capable veterans. Already official candidates have been selected to fight the seats of the four seceders to the New Party.

If the Labor Cabinet is determined (as looks probable) to stay in until the end of its legal life in 1933 in order to save the workers from the worst effects of the depression and to secure disarmament and solve the problem of India, there is much to be said for an agreement with the Liberals on an openly agreed program of definite items. About foreign policy there seems already to be little difference. What now happens is that there are feelers as to what would be supported by the diminishing flock led by Lloyd George. Then misunderstandings arise and much time is wasted or the bill is dropped. Lloyd George, however, is an uncertain ally and such an agreement would lead to open arrangements in the electoral districts which would lead to confusion. The tax on land values and the restriction of the powers of the House of Lords seem likely election slogans to secure Liberal support.

## "Inevitability of Gradualness"

In all this bargaining, the main issue of replacing capitalism by Socialism and of keeping that goal clear and making all reforms tend in that direction stands in danger of being forgotten. The Independent Labor Party, which has always claimed to be the parent guardian angel of the Labor Party, for various reasons is at loggerheads with it. It is argued that the I.L.P. finished its job when the Labor Party was created and that the latter's provision for individual members made it superfluous. MacDonald and

Snowden and their followers have left the I.L.P. because of its criticism of the Government and it should be remembered that it was the I.L.P. which secured the premiership for MacDonald, the unpopular war opponent, when he and Clynes, who had been in the war-time Coalition ministry, were rival nominees for that position.

With MacDonald departed the Buxtons and others who had made regular financial contributions to the I.L.P. Even the M. P.'s for whom the I.L.P. was financially responsible did not follow Maxton as leader of the I.L.P. group in Parliament when it came to voting against the Government. Some of the personal publicity stunts (the seizing of the mace, etc.) and the unsubstantiated charges of individual corruption made by some of the I.L.P. Group members did it harm. Then too there was division among the mixed elements which had no united theoretical basis of action. MacDonald had worked out his "post-Darwin evolutionary Socialism"; had dismissed the class struggle as a "melodramatic phrase"; and viewed the community as an organic whole slowly developing with "the inevitability of gradualness". That is why MacDonald was utterly out of place in the National Strike of 1926 and why he succeeds best in foreign affairs where the nation is apparently a "community" and when he can get all parties committed very gradually to conceding a federal government for India and uniting in demonstrations for disarmament.

MacDonald's failure as a leader of the working class movement comes naturally from his theoretical point of view. The I.L.P. branches themselves participated zealously in every local and national, political and industrial struggle of the workers, but during the war the I.L.P. naturally collected many pacifist elements. These mixed elements were a source of weakness and also, as the Labor Party itself grew, many of the I.L.P. members took service with the greater unit. Friction between the Labor Party and the I. L. P. was created when the I.L.P. group (about 20) voted against the Government on various occasions when they thought questions of Socialist principle were involved. This right the I.L.P., now under the chairmanship of Fenner Brockway, insists upon retaining.

## Debut of S. S. I. P.

In the middle of June a new propagandist body made its official debut to do the necessary thinking and program making. G. D. H. Cole is the leading spirit of this Society for Socialist Inquiry and Propaganda. He has secured Ernest Bevin of the T. U. C. General Council (typical of the trade union leaders disconnected with the achievements of the Labor Government) to serve as chairman and Arthur Pugh of the Iron and Steel Trades Confederation and W. R. Blair of the Cooperative movement to serve as vice-chairmen. Its members are only drawn from members of the Labor Party and its affiliated bodies and it aims to develop and advocate a constructive Socialist policy. Bevin at the inaugural meeting declared:

"We are met to try to create a feeling that we ought not to be fed up, that if you feel dissatisfied with the Government you don't have to be dissatisfied with Socialism."

Cole in accepting the nickname of "loyal grouchers" made it clear that S.S.I.P. would not try to run candidates:

"We want to work out afresh what Socialism means to the modern world, we want to make a policy that will be fresh, realistic and socialistic."

Plans have been made to run a journal and the New Fabian Research Bureau has been set up in conjunction with S.S.I.P. to investigate social problems.

It remains to be seen whether these new bodies will be something like the L.I.D. in the U.S.A. working chiefly among the younger men and women of the colleges whom the Labor Party heads would not like to see attracted away to the New Party or the C.P. It may be a new Fabian Society with the Coles replacing the Webbs in giving a blue print for the next 25 years of Labor activity. Or it may build up a net work of branches throughout the country which will restate Socialism effectively. Undoubtedly the problem of taking over industry by encroaching control needs consideration.

The Trades Union Congress will probably indulge in some plain speaking on the faults of omission of the Labor Government, and the fact that the depression still weighs more heavily upon the British workers will strengthen the arguments of those in the Labor Party who wish for a bold program which Labor would be able to carry before the country and arouse the enthusiasm of its members to its old pitch of intensity.

# Woll's Photo-Engravers

Editor, Labor Age,

Dear Sir:

By unanimous action of unemployed members assembled at 625 World Building, July 6, 1931, the following resolutions were by unanimous vote adopted:

**RESOLVED:** That the Unemployed Chapel members of New York Photo-Engravers Union No. 1, of New York City hereby repudiates the writer, also articles appearing in June issue of *LABOR AGE* and *The New Leader* under caption of "Open Letter to Matthew Woll" and be it further

**RESOLVED:** That publishers of *LABOR AGE* and *The New Leader* be requested to publicly acknowledge the receipt of these resolutions and be it further

**RESOLVED:** That copy of these resolutions be forwarded to Matthew Woll, Vice President of American Federation of Labor, Vice President, International Photo Engravers Union of N. A., Publishers of *LABOR AGE* and *The New Leader*.

The foregoing resolutions were adopted due to the fact there was absolutely no endorsement of "Open Letter to Matthew Woll" by the Unemployed Chapel of Photo Engravers, also the person submitting letter was given no authority to use Unemployed Chapel of New York Photo Engravers Union No. 1, as signatory to any communication on letter whatsoever.

In justice to the several hundred members involved it is respectfully suggested that this communication be given same consideration as was the "Open Letter to Matthew Woll."

Very truly yours,

CHARLES DREESE, Shairman,  
Unemployed Chapel,  
New York Photo-Engravers' Union No. 1.

## MR. HERRMANN'S REPLY

There are occasions when tact must give way to truth; this is such an occasion. I have yet to witness a more contemptible and cowardly piece of mendacity than the above letter as a whole and the fifth paragraph in particular which you will notice is not a part of the resolution.

Charles Dreese voted for the open letter to Woll, and his predecessor in the chairmanship proposed at a chapel meeting in May that the letter be written. I volunteered to write it, and, at the request of the chairman, read it to the chapel on June 1. I concluded its

reading amidst applause. Then the question of its signing arose and it was decided that the letter should be signed, Unemployed Chapel. The letter was then moved, seconded and adopted without any adverse argument nor a dissenting vote.

Due to my absence from the city on July 6, I did not attend the chapel meeting at which this "repudiation" took place, but at the next meeting will learn the details and pay my respects to those responsible.

In spite of this "repudiation," the struggle against Woll must go on. As long as he and his stamp are at the head of the American labor movement, it will remain the thing of impotence it is today. Such a fact may render aid and comfort to Woll's open shop associates in the National Civic Federation but will leave the toiling millions of this nation in a helpless condition.

(Signed) GEORGE HERRMANN.

## In addition

### Mr. Herrmann adds:

The last convention of the American Federation of Labor in Boston—remember Sacco and Vanzetti—was a bivouac with the dead. Green, in addressing the convention, expressed the hope that "when we go from here back to our homes we will carry with us the fondest memories of a delightful visit in the city of Boston." Not one thing of any worthwhile significance to the labor movement happened at that convention, yet Green called it an historic convention.

We see the president of one International labor advisor to the Republican National Committee and another International President labor advisor to the Democratic National Committee, while several others are associating with open shoppers in the National Civic Federation, one of whom came within an inch of turning his union into a company union. These men say labor is not a commodity. Why! Even their own souls are commodities.

Reverting back to Woll, you will recollect the furor that he attempted to stir up over forced labor in Russian lumber camps. The *New York Times* of Monday, July 20, carries a dispatch from Walter Duranty, its Moscow correspondent. The dispatch deals with the findings of a delegation of the British timber trades federation, which investigated the Russian timber industry. The dispatch is

nearly a column long and is a most crushing answer to Woll's false propaganda. The investigators, all experts on the timber industry, reported that everywhere they found labor conditions excellent and the people contented, and declared without reservation that there was not a scrap of evidence which indicated forced labor; that the stories of convicts working under armed guards were myths, and that the inhabitants of the timber regions simply pooch-pooched the stories of atrocities. The alleged eye-witness story of forced labor was torn to shreds.

The motives for Woll's agitation for an embargo against Russian timber may be gathered from two other incidents. One is his association with Weyerhaeuser, colossus of the timber industry in the United States, and named by James W. Gerard as one of the 64 men who rule America. The other incident is the book, "Labor and Lumber," by Charlotte Todes, recently prepared for the Labor Research Association. After stating that the elder Weyerhaeuser at his death left a fortune of 300 million dollars, obtained mostly by larcenous methods, and listing some of the holdings of the Weyerhaeuser syndicate, Charlotte Todes writes:

"Thousands of workers have built the wealth of this enormous syndicate. The company has never tolerated union organization and has always maintained a system of espionage to prevent attempts by the workers to organize for better conditions. In every Weyerhaeuser town evidences of poverty and hardship are everywhere, while the domination of the Weyerhaeusers over the lumber industry and the means of livelihood of the workers becomes more powerful and formidable daily."

There is an abundance of data concerning Matt Woll's true function in the labor movement, and I believe it should be collected between two covers and placed in the hands of every photo-engraver by whose vote Woll maintains his position in the labor movement. The time is ripe, and rotten ripe, for Woll to leave, not the N. C. F., but the labor movement.

In the *Locomotive Engineers' Journal* of July, 1926, Robert W. Dunn concludes his expose of Easley, labor spy and Woll's secretary in the N. C. F., with the statement that Easley is the tool of the industrialists who won and control America; so permit me to close with the statement that Woll is Easley's tool.

# Flashes from the Labor World

Flashes from the labor world during the past month? Plenty of them. Flashes of lightning against a sky black with thunder clouds.

The German workers scared some 400-odd millions of dollars out of the capitalists of the world because they flashed their power in the bosses' faces. The American workers sunk still lower in their desperate plight, with only here and there a flash to lighten the darkness.

\* \* \*

The darkest spot is the drive of the United States government to smash down the standard of living of the workers with its huge power. During this month has been blasted the last bluff of the Hoover administration that it wants high wages or the well-being of the common people.

Secretary of Labor William N. Doak, former official of the Brotherhood of Railroad Trainmen, is leading an attack on the workers which is insidious and dangerous, an attack destined to affect the aggressiveness of every part of the labor movement in the land, radical and conservative alike, unless a protest frightens his White House boss and takes the edge off his bitterness.

Doak's attack is through the power of deportation. All unions, practically, have a large and usually valuable element of foreign-born. Doak is aggressively carrying out the policy which has been announced by one of his immediate subordinates, of deporting anyone active in a strike. At first he bluffed that he was deporting only Communists, so as to gain the support of non-Communists. Then the road workers in wealthy Westchester County, N. Y., fought a wage of \$3.20 a day in a strike which was definitely non-Communist. Doak's agents rushed into the strike area and made a systematic search for aliens for deportation.

The formula is simple. A striker has no means of support. An alien liable to become a public charge is deportable. Therefore any alien on strike is deportable. Workers have been arrested for passing handbills—and held for deportation. If a worker takes a radical paper, he is deportable. If he does the simplest work in a strike or if he is out of a job and looking for one, he is deportable. There is little defense, for Doak seems to have the final and full power.

Even in a frame-up, a worker has to be taken through the forms of a trial

and he has some hope that the frame-up will fail at some point. But here is dictatorship at its worst, where one politician can take a man from his family, no matter if he came to America a babe in arms, and send him to a country now strange to him, because he fights a \$3.20-a-day wage.

Nor is the American-born immune. Recently Ann Burlak, born in Pennsylvania, was arrested on the certainty that she was leading a successful textile strike and on suspicion that she had been brought to America at the age of two. She was kept in jail as long as they could keep up the bluff, away from her activity, but finally was released. The strike had not been broken and Doak's scabbing had failed in one instance.

High scab of a scab administration, Doak is adding blackness to the clouds for the American worker, and unnecessarily painting black an administration that already bids fair to go down in history as one of America's darkest.

\* \* \*

Secretary of Commerce Lamont helps along the smashing down of labor standards by giving a frank O. K. to the wage-slashing in the textile industry. A Congressman from the textile districts wrote him a letter, carrying much hooey to the effect that the bosses who had attended Hoover's famous conference which pledged the A. F. of L. against striking and the bosses against wage cuts, had not cut wages. But, the Congressman pointed out with true Yankee shrewdness that textile bosses had not been invited and doubtless this was the reason wages had been skidding so in that industry!

Lamont answered that wages had been kept up by the Hoover conference—although the government reports hundreds of wage cuts a month and he knows it—but that many corporations now find their reserves reduced and must cut wages. This was immediately interpreted by the newspapers as the official Hoover O. K. on a pay-cutting policy.

\* \* \*

The whole coal industry is a thunderstorm all its own. Strikes led by the National Miners Union continue to hold the largest number out of the pits, centering in Pittsburgh. Plans are being made by this organization for a nationwide strike call in October and only a

seventh son would try to guess what the result may be if starvation continues in the fields as at present. The new West Virginia Mine Workers Union has struck the Kanawha field with results known to every Labor Age reader—present results, that is. Again no one can foretell whether this movement may tie to the rebel movement in southern Illinois and make a new non-Communist and non-A. F. of L. miners union. The Harlan struggle continues with some 100 in jail awaiting trial on Aug. 17. It started under local United Mine Worker auspices—who has it now is anybody's guess. Certainly the miners are going to the left as the Lewis machine leaves them defenseless in the hands of gunmen.

On one day two scabs and a boy striker were killed. The feeling grows more intense as the bosses use their courts and their gunmen to add to the pressure hunger is already putting on the miners to return to the pits. Miners have always been the vanguard of the American workers. Where that vanguard may lead in the next year, no one knows. The worker who cannot find some way to send relief into the coal fields these days does not know the labor struggle or is hardened beyond words.

\* \* \*

Before you kick about the panic affecting you weep a tear for the poor eastern Texas oil man. Oil is selling at the well for 1½¢ a barrel, water for drilling at 3¢ a barrel.

\* \* \*

Reports from the west indicate that the farmers may revolt before the workers do. In many places they are organizing for political action. In some they are taking arms instead of votes. They are refusing to pay taxes, debts and interest and there is nothing the banks can do about it since the farms aren't worth what the banks have loaned on them. Even if they were, there aren't any purchasers for farms while wheat is 25¢ a bushel. While a worker on the breadline may hope for a job tomorrow, a farmer whose crop is sold knows there's nothing more for him for a year. In the wheat belt they are desperate. Eastern workers may need to be told that there is no Sullivan law in the west; they all have guns; they know how to shoot straight; the habit of eating is strong upon them.

FRANK L. PALMER.



# In Other Lands

## GERMANY

Foreign bankers and non-German creditors withdrew their money and deposits of gold from Germany when they pretended to fear Berlin was about to repudiate its debts, or what it had a right to do—suspend payment on the reparations. Just what was the precise cause of the trouble or what was fundamentally at the bottom of the arranged crisis can be surmised from the European papers. Bonds fell twenty and even forty points below par, banks failed in Austria and its credit bonds went crashing down. The Bank of England, always responsive to the commercial nerves and industrial pulsebeats of Continental Europe, rushed to the breach and tried to save the falling system in Budapest and Vienna. German cities became involved and the newspapers and rumor mills did the rest. Weeks before Hoover cabled Hindenburg for exact data, London papers were telling of the coming crash in Berlin.

When the credits and gold were taken from the Berlin banks the trouble came to a head. The Bank of England got busy. J. P. Morgan was handy at his English estate to advise, and the U. S. Federal Reserve joined the Bond Brigadiers. Professor Murray Butler, international capitalist's pleader, had returned to New York from his "tour" of Europe with portmanteaus and satchels of "advise". All was ready and Hoover acted.

Wall Street came to life. Bonds and stocks were sold by the million and it looked as if "prosperity" had come back. Two or three days of this and we were back in the same old rut. Prosperity did not stay and Wall Street, like Micawber, settled back waiting for something to turn up. The doctors went into conference planning to save the life of the German patient. Of course the patient was saved, for it was never in serious danger. What was in danger was the private loans and investments of the U. S., British and other money lenders and bond buyers. When the different countries through their big bankers and finance ministers got together, first in Paris and next in London, and conversed, the air was cleared. Short term loans and credits were given Berlin, and the bond and investment markets were saved. Socialists like Braun and Labor Ministers like MacDonald joined hands with ultra-capitalist statesmen like

M. Norman, A. Mellon and H. Hoover to rescue the drowning capitalist system. Only the representatives of the middle class of Germany made anything like a kick. The Hitlerites said Berlin must make no political deal with Paris. Chancellor Bruening said O. K. and the Fascisti kept still for awhile. Paris wanted promises and reservations. Hoover, following the MacDonald lead, said there must be no politics. That was impossible but no serious deals were made, at least France was not permitted to play the role of first mortgager.

Both France and England are opposed to the Austrian customs union. If the London Herald means anything in public opinion England is inclined a bit towards France in its opposition to Germany's warship program. Berlin is, however, living up to the Treaty on this score and says nothing. The political situation is more confused than ever. All the great parties are evenly balanced, which ordinarily would make the work of the Chancellor impossible, but Bruening is able to play one off against the other. He is also fortunate in that Braun, the Socialist leader and one of the most powerful men in the Reich, prefers to work with the Chancellor's party, the Catholic Centre, to having madcap Hitler and his nationalist lunatics on his hands. If Hitler had not left the Reichstag he would now be in a position to make trouble for the Chancellor and for Braun whom he cordially detests.

All in all Germany is not ruled by a dictatorship, but very near one in that President Hindenburg and a group, which one can call the directorate, are running the show without being responsible to the legislature. Braun prefers the directorate to a Hitler dictatorship, and he prefers a capitalist state run by the leading Catholic clerical politician to a revolution which the Fascisti would precipitate. So the Social-Democrats and the capitalist statesmen are furnishing the world with its greatest and wildest paradox since Dean Swift wrote his immortal Gulliver's Travels. The party of revolution stands for order and the party of regulated order stands for upheaval and chaos; while the clerical group joins hands with the atheist—and all to save a dying system, an order that has seen its best and brightest days. While those extraordinary developments are happening the standard of living of the workers is being undermined and reduced and the Communists are steadily increasing in numbers and power.

## GREAT BRITAIN

Linked up with Germany and France were the most important events of Britain during the past month. As the oldest capitalist nation Britain is always expected to play a prominent role when European affairs are under discussion. MacDonald with the aid of his efficient Foreign Office Staff has been manipulating the wires to create a crisis and then mend matters. He went to Berlin, and Bruening in turn went to Chequers, and all conferred.

MacDonald got Hoover to play his game of assisting Germany to offset France. The Bank of England went to the rescue of Germany, Austria and Hungary with credits and gold for deposits in the semi-government banks of those countries. MacDonald also attended a great "peace" demonstration and spoke with Baldwin and Lloyd George, the leading imperialist statesman of Britain. There was a strong anti-French note in the speeches of the Premier and ex-premiers. MacDonald did not draw the fire of the French, for Laval does not believe in mass meeting diplomacy. He did get Americans angry when he claimed they were behind the British in pacifism. Writers, naval officers and generals turned on MacDonald and tore his figures and his anti-war claims to tatters.

Mosely, though in the opposition now, has not gone over to the Tories as hinted at by some writers. Mosely's party is anti-MacDonald. Lloyd George manages to make up for all radical rebellions against MacDonald and Snowden by consistently supporting the Labor Government against all Tory attacks. There is no question of MacDonald's ability to hold his own in foreign affairs. His cabinet has built up considerable prestige as a result of the fine handling of every foreign complicated situation. In domestic matters he is, however, as unfortunate as he is lucky and capable in foreign fields.

The government was practically obliged to cancel the Australian debts, although the wheat crop may save the faces of all. Many of the colonies and dependencies are in a bad way financially. Soon France, Britain and all the countries whose statesmen formerly denounced the Bolsheviki for repudiating Czaristic debts will be making apologies to Moscow, for they are doing precisely the very thing Trotzky and Lenin did several years ago when there were better reasons for so doing.

PATRICK L. QUINLAN.



## "Say It With Books"



### MEN STARVE IN THE MIDST OF PLENTY

**The Problem of Unemployment**, by Paul Douglas and Aaron Director. The Macmillan Co., New York. 505 pages, \$3.50.

Unemployment brings untold misery into the lives of countless millions. The jobless and their dependents suffer most, yet those who have jobs labor under an added strain. Speeded up as never before, their wages cut, fearful that they may be next to be laid off, their lot is not to be envied either. So heavily has unemployment borne down upon the workers ever since the Industrial Revolution that the literature of Labor is filled with bitter protest against this scourge. Employers, on the other hand, while perturbed about periods of depression have been quite complacent in the past about unemployment, except to clamor for the militia when hungry and desperate workers rioted. The current depression, however, seems to have brought a dim realization to some of them that all is not well with the social order. Such expressions as "Capitalism is on trial" are heard from time to time. Then, too, the necessity for maintaining the purchasing power of the masses if mass production is to be kept pace with is being brought home to many business men these days. This may explain why Swarthmore College was asked by a group of Philadelphia and New York business men to make a study of the problem of unemployment. Paul Douglas and Aaron Director were assigned to this study, and this book is their report.

The president of the college, Frank Aydelotte, expresses succinctly the apprehension of a good many people when he declares in his preface: "The failure of our industrial organization to function smoothly, the fact that men must starve because they have produced too much food, or go naked because they have produced too many clothes, or sleep in the parks because they have built too many houses—this failure is fraught with the gravest consequences to the security and well-being of all industrial states."

Just what this failure means, its extent and cost, is covered in the first chapters of this book. The human costs

of unemployment are strikingly portrayed. The authors point out that during this depression in New York City the weekly consumption of milk has dropped by a million quarts, that smaller quantities of vegetables are purchased, that many children lacking shoes and clothing were unable to go to school, that workers' living quarters have become more congested than ever, that there is more illness, that admissions to tuberculosis clinics have increased, that charity organizations are swamped with appeals and that insanity grows as a result of fear and worry about the future. What a price to pay for the planlessness of capitalism!

They discuss thoroughly and comprehensively various phases of seasonal, technological and cyclical unemployment. They consider the placement of labor question—employment agencies—and finally unemployment insurance. The wealth of material packed into this volume can be of great value to the labor writer or speaker, if the economics advanced by the authors are not taken too seriously. Since they teach economics in Swarthmore College the authors apparently have to be careful about the susceptibilities of business men. In fact, the various suggestions for the alleviation of unemployment are presented in such a way as to convince the employers that the necessary changes will be to their narrow interest.

As an example of the authors' brand of economics we may refer to their argument that there can be no such thing as permanent technological unemployment. Now permanent and temporary are relative terms. It brings to mind the story of the clerk who held a position for 20 years. When told that his services were no longer required he complained: "Why didn't you tell me when you took me on that this was a temporary position?" It would be difficult to convince workers who have been unemployed for two years because of the introduction of machinery in their industry that technological unemployment is not permanent. And it is easy for college professors to offer solutions that

do not solve. For instance the coal mining industry is overcrowded. What do they propose? "If courses and training," they say, "could be given in the mining districts in such subjects as automobile repairing, clerical work, selling, etc., it would be possible to drain off a large number from the industry . . ."

Considering what the depression has done to the automobile industry and the fact that thousands of auto mechanics are starving in Detroit and elsewhere, the suggestion is ludicrous. And as for clerical workers, in the commercial center of the country, New York City, the waiting rooms of employment agencies for office workers are filled to overflowing. Even in the best of times the high schools and commercial colleges grind out clerical workers by the thousands so that there is always a surplus of this class of workers. Imagine training miners to become clerical workers and bringing them from Pennsylvania, say, to New York to compete with those at work and those looking for work! The \$20-\$30 a week salaries would drop to still lower levels.

The Marxian theory that panics are caused by the fact that workers cannot buy back the goods which are produced is too easily dismissed. The error of this theory, according to the authors, is that those who uphold it consider wages to be identical with the national income. They don't, but let that pass. These theorists are advised to remember that those who receive rent, interest and profit do not keep their incomes in idleness. Some of their money is spent for commodity goods, and the remainder is invested in other industries. This creates employment for workers in these new industries; that is, say the authors, assuming that the savings are promptly invested by capitalists, and, they add, if there is a lag there will be an increase in unemployment. And that is just where the trouble comes in! The lag exists and labor suffers. Incidentally, the argument does not overthrow the Marxian theory, but perhaps this is not the place to go to the mat with the authors on the question of surplus value.

The chapters on Employment Agencies are informative. Facts are presented regarding the private employment agencies which act as leeches on the jobless, and plans for an efficient, nation-wide public employment service are offered.

Unemployment insurance schemes in other lands are discussed with considerable detail. Information is given concerning contributions made by workers, employers and governments, the benefits received by jobless workers and how the administrative machinery works. So far as the United States is concerned the union benefit plans, according to the authors, are noteworthy for the meagerness of their experience. A chapter is devoted to employer insurance plans and another joint plans between employers and unions. All of them cover only 151,200 workers, or one half of one per cent of the wage and salaried workers in this country.

The books also relates the few legislative attempts made to enact unemployment insurance bills, and concludes with the plan favored by Prof. Douglas of joint contributions by workers and employers. As *LABOR AGE* readers know, this is generally opposed by progressive workers' organizations in the United States. There may be some difference among workers as to whether the employers alone or employers and the state together should cover the cost of unemployment insurance, but certainly present sentiment appears to be strongly set against the workers contributing from their slender incomes.

—LEONARD BRIGHT.

## Belleville Convention

(Continued from page 11)

tion, shall meet to organize an International organization of coal miners controlled by, and in the interest of the Rank and File themselves.

JAMES HAYNES,  
WM. STOFFELS,

Local Union No. 721, Pana, Ill."

This resolution was along the lines of a statement issued on behalf of the miners' branch of the C.P.L.A. and distributed during one of the early days of the convention. The C.P.L.A. statement made a profound impression on the delegates, was very favorably received and to a large extent helped in shaping the policy of the convention on crucial issues, because it really represented the sentiments in the hearts of the rank and file of the miners.

The resolution and the statement which we have quoted are self-explanatory,

and no further extended comment is needed at this time. It is seen that the rank and file organization has refused to recognize, on the one hand, the "National Miners Union" as an organization, and on the other hand, refuses to recognize the Illinois district organization or the present U. M. W. of A. international organization, instructing all locals to cease paying dues to both the present district and the present Lewis international machine. The Belleville miners give their allegiance in the district to the rank and file miners of District 12 of the U. M. W. of A., and for the rest "will be under the jurisdiction of the rank and file international union when such is established." They seek unity, however, with all miners, regardless of past or present affiliations, being genuinely committed to a united front of the rank and file.

The National Miners Union's strength at the convention was entirely negligible.

Chairman Muste of the C.P.L.A. addressed the convention, mainly on behalf of the West Virginia Mine Workers' Union. He was given an

enthusiastic reception, and after his address the convention voted unanimously to take a collection for the West Virginia strikers, and instructed all local unions to assess themselves for this strike.

The provisional officers of the convention, who served also as provisional officers of the rank and file organization, were Ray Edmonson, chairman, and William Keck, secretary. In the very near future a regular election of officials will be held. It is announced that a publication to be known as the *Rank and File Miner* will be gotten out immediately. This is an interesting and very practical step.

Details as to resolutions and constitution adopted are not yet at hand. Future issues of *LABOR AGE* will carry the story further. For the present, we can confidently say that if the Illinois movement presses on along the lines laid down in the Belleville convention, and if the locals of Illinois rally to the movement as they should do, a great forward step has been taken toward the building of a clean, militant and progressive union for the coal miners of the nation.

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## Report on Political Organization

(Continued from page 7)

ment as a basis for discussing the advisability of forming a Labor Party in the near future, with the understanding that not only did it not commit the C.P.L.A. to everything contained therein, but that members of the Committee were free to express their disagreement with certain portions of the statement. Nevertheless, as the statement is issued by the C.P.L.A., it is bound to be regarded as an expression of the most influential elements of the organization, if not as the opinion of the majority. For this reason, I must dissent from the paragraph devoted to considering whether the Socialist Party meets the political "needs of the American workers today."

In my opinion it is too broad and sweeping an indictment—one which will not stand up under analysis. Certain portions of it may apply to certain elements within the Party. None of them will apply to all the elements within the Party. Furthermore, no consideration has been given to the growing influence of the Socialist "militants." Surely the promptness with which Morris Hillquit withdrew as counsel in the suit involving the Soviet Union's right to confiscate oil wells, etc. is an indication of the effectiveness of the "militants" in rallying Party opinion on a vital issue.

Neither has it been shown that the doors of the Socialist Party are closed to progressive laborites. Enough of them joining the Socialist Party can make it what they want it to be. Moreover, no acknowledgement has been made of the splendid support rendered by Socialist Party members in the West Virginia strike. Already Party members are aiding in Paterson, and more of them will do so as the struggle grows in intensity.

Where I differ from most of the "militant" Socialists is in their hope that the Party will become *the* mass Labor party in this country, while I look forward to the establishment of a Labor Party of which the Socialist Party will be an integral part, playing a role similar to that of the Independent Labor Party in England, but this is a matter for the future. In the meantime, it cannot be overemphasized that any Labor Party that may be formed should under no circumstances be in opposition to the Socialist Party.

Thus far, in all discussions within the National Executive Committee this has been the unanimous opinion. Therefore, it is regrettable that the criticism of the Socialist Party in the foregoing statement should have been made in such a form as possibly to alienate Socialist Party members from the C.P.L.A. Because the best elements in the Socialist Party have much in common with the C.P.L.A. and in the hope that no breach shall be created between them is my reason for offering these remarks for publication simultaneously with the statement.

LEONARD BRIGHT.

## Anarchy in the Dress-makers Industry

(Continued from page 20)

employers, the jobbers and manufacturers as well as contractors in the Dress Trade to take the responsibility for its working force; to educate and plan in order to establish conditions to enable them to make a decent living.

The parent body, the I.L.G.W.U., is looking through its fingers upon all these activities, lending a willing ear to the right wing Club members. The membership at large, educated through the slanderous literature for the past few years, is totally indifferent.

The older members of the Dress-makers' union—those who stood by the cradle during this factional split, have lost their vitality and are too exhausted to make a new start. Only a small militant group remains to carry on the forceful work of reorganizing the union.

The Wall Street crash last fall, the break of the United States and other banks left multitudes penniless, among them chiefly small-fry dress contractors and small business men. Some shops had to close up for lack of funds to carry on; others either could not pay the rest of the wages to their employees or would not. All this, on top of lack of concerted activities, inadequate employment facilities, lack of control, highly seasonal nature of the industry, transfer of ownership from manufacturer to jobber and outside contractor, resulting in cut-throat competition, the piece-work system—all are causes which make a dressmaker travel in one week through four different shops, and the next week be kept busy collecting the wages earned the week prior.

## The Battle of White Plains

(Continued from page 17)

these methods and a number of scurrilous leaflets issued in English and Spanish, the Communists secured no foothold in the strike, but played a definite part in disorganizing the poorly organized forces of the laborers and in presenting the contractors with a Communist bogie.

What will be the outcome of it all? There is every hope and indication that as a result of the struggle, and the inspiring messages of C.P.L.A. through A. J. Muste, Rose Pesotta, Jack Lever, and Louis F. Budenz, the seed of organization has penetrated and taken root. It will not be long before the men under the attacks of the contractors, will again be compelled to seriously tackle the question of organization. The present struggle has succeeded in knitting together a more clear, conscious and practical kernel, who, let us hope, will be the center and the driving force of a real organization and the future battle of White Plains.

**Note:** Since this article was written, the men have been signed up into Local 60, Common Laborers Union, A. F. of L. by Mr. Thomas J. O'Connor and Esquil Cuevas, who have entered into an agreement to work *as far as possible*." At least 75 per cent of the strikers have been refused reemployment, and the scabs are being retained. In other words the laborers have been led into a most shameful sell-out.

## Liberalism in the S. P.

(Continued from page 14)

rent trend would not have become so conspicuous.

However, we have reached a turning point. Henceforth we expect to raise questions and to criticise trends, not in a spirit of rancor yet with a determination that the Socialist movement shall get back to its working class fundamentals and our friend Bright will have an opportunity to emerge from his droll "pragmatism" or stay there if he prefers.

Finally, we may commend to Bright and any others who may accept his policy of preferring to be wrong with one member than right with another, another code of ethics. He will find it at the end of the first preface to Marx's "Capital." Translated it reads:

"Hold fast to thy course, let men say what they will."



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